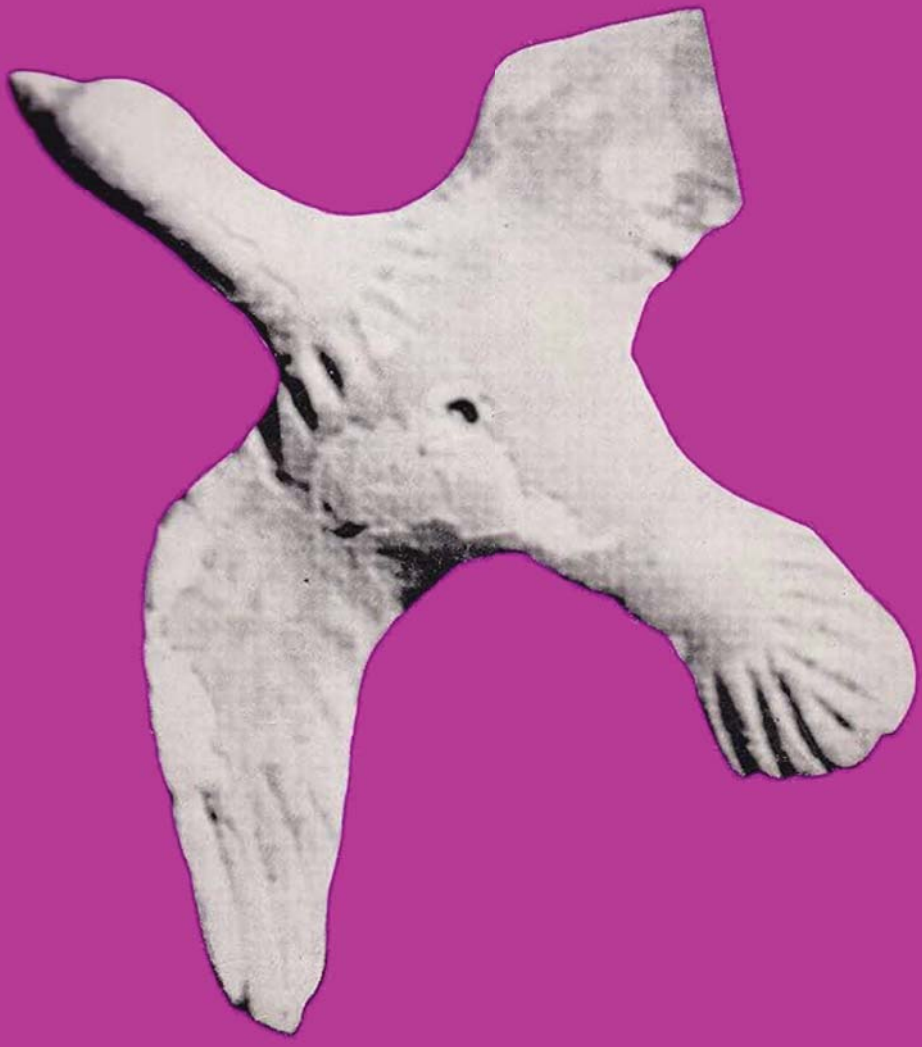
The Muse of the Cathars



René Nelli

BERSERKER
BOOKS

I had initially planned to bring together, in a sort of ethnographic collection, reproductions of all the Ogitaae folk art objects that display decorative features — whether abstract or figurative — — — and are quite distinctly typical. The interest currently surrounding Catharism has led me to publish separately, without delay, all those objects that appear to bear a distinct kétérodom imprint — whether religious, magical or simply symbolic — probably of Neo-Manichaean origin. This volume is therefore a photographic catalogue of objects presumed to be Cathar or relating to a Cathar tradition. It is limited to the year 1964, because the results of the excavations undertaken in various places, notably at Montségur and Sainte-Juliane, over recent years have not yet been published, and I have not been able to examine them at my leisure. However, readers will find here most of the monuments and objects—some long since recorded, others previously unpublished—held in museums and private collections, as well as the most significant of those that have remained in situ in

our countryside. As the latter run the risk every day of being stolen or destroyed, I felt it was necessary, without further delay, to preserve them at least
and, at the same time — since Cathar iconography has hitherto been largely neglected — to make available as soon as possible to comparative scholars, archaeologists and ethnographers a collection of materials that might help them, where appropriate, to clarify the significance of their own discoveries.

It cannot be denied that the precise identification of these works of art remains, given the current state of our knowledge, extremely difficult and that, consequently, their attribution to Catharism must always be regarded as hypothetical and provisional. There is perhaps not a single one of them that can be regarded as Cathar with absolute certainty: some are very likely to be so. That is why I have chosen to include here, on a provisional basis, a number of rather dubious objects, which nevertheless reflect a certain heterodox spirit, in the hope that further research will one day enable them to be authenticated (or definitively rejected), and that they will, in any case, provide useful points of comparison—whether positive or negative—with a view to this final determination. What difficulties does one encounter when embarking on the study of Cathar iconography? The greatest

serious difficulty perhaps lies in the fact that the precise contexts — particularly archaeological ones — are most often lacking. Let us recall, for example, that the site of the Cathar huts

< Cathar > huts, situated on the northern slope of the Mont-Aiguille, has been so thoroughly disrupted by treasure hunters and amateur excavators who have frequented the site from around 1830 to the present day, that it has now become almost impossible — except for the deepest, prehistoric and protohistoric layers — to reconstruct the original stratigraphy, and consequently to date the objects according to the layer in which they are found: Roman coins have been brought to the surface and 11th-century artefacts have been mixed with the Visigothic layer in the excavated soil. This complicates, incidentally, the task of the archaeologists from Ariège and Aude who are currently continuing, in the same area, with aerial surveys and

The literary contexts are also lacking: we do not know what the religious symbolism of the Catliariame consisted of, assuming it ever really existed, and so we never know what to look for or what to recognise. No text provides us with any information. No medieval author has ever made the slightest allusion to the **sacred** artefacts, to the 'objects of piety' associated with heterodoxy. In this regard, we are reduced to formulating hypotheses— which are always risky—or to seeking the advice of

hermetists, whose judgement is not to be dismissed when it comes to symbolism, but is not always reliable when it comes to archaeology.

Let us add—a third difficulty, incidentally linked to the previous one—that the remains presumed to be Cathar usually reveal only combinations of geometric motifs. However, even if one accepts as plausible that they do indeed correspond to elements of traditional Cathar symbolism, the fact remains that they are also — and more broadly — part of a wider tradition — one that falls within the scope of ethnography and is purely decorative, one which is both much earlier (in terms of its archetypes) than the 10th and 11th centuries and much later, since it has survived, right up to the present day, in the folk art of our provinces. The various forms of Greek crosses and solar crosses, whether or not inscribed within circles, appear as early as protohistory: they adorn pottery from almost all eras, everyday objects, and funerary monuments of peoples belonging to entirely different cultural levels (11th-century Aedois stelae; pre-Roman stelae from Spain and Portugal); but they are also found on modern Basque and Occitan stelae, and on much of the rustic French furniture of the 18th and 19th centuries. The oval-petalled rose—perhaps because they are easy to carve—has been used almost without interruption and almost everywhere in France, as a symbolic and ornamental motif. They

are frequently carved on Iberian diacoidal artefacts, Roman and barbarian sarcophagi, and also, in defiance of any chronology, on Occitan artefacts; and they persist to this day on Languedoc, Provençal and Alesian cupboards and chests, as well as on wooden vessels where shepherds and woodcarvers generally take to engraving designs with a knife. The same applies to the swastika, the cross with notches, and the five-pointed star — of which the northerners made particularly extensive use from the Middle Ages)right up to the end of the nineteenth century — and which can be found just as readily on Roman tulle as on the door lintels of our present-day farms in the Lauragais. How, then, could one recognise, from the outset, in this constant array of symbols, anything other than mere ornamentation? How, above all, could one distinguish those to which a religious or magical significance is attached from those which have never had — or no longer have — any value other than decorative?

It should be emphasised, however, that most of the monuments presumed to be Oatharea almost never display the aesthetic characteristics of refined styles, the only ones that can be reliably dated. They exhibit little more than the constant features of folk art, or even art brut. Nothing in the small carved or engraved objects * bears the distinct hallmark of the century. Even the diadems, when their only decoration is a Greek cross

inscribed within a circle, exist, so to speak, outside of time, and consequently always appear older than they actually are. There is, in Carcassonne, a stele of this kind which might, be considered, were it not dated 1623, as contemporary with the Cathar movement. The richly ornamented stelae, it is true, are more easily dated, but these are the later ones: they generally belong to the 13th or 15th centuries. — As for the anthropomorphic and realistic figurines, although they are not all Romanesque, they have

42H features Romanesque elements, most often attributable to the craftsman's clumsiness — which is, incidentally, quite expressive. And as they have always
'unique', comparison is of little help in placing them within their chronological contexts.

For all these reasons, I have had to adopt, in my research, a quasi-empirical method. Rejecting
the idea — which is obviously untenable — that certain symbols, whether geometric or highly stylised, would have belonged specifically to one religion or one cultural complex rather than another; admitting, on the contrary, that all had been used — and constantly — by all the peoples of France, though in varying ways according to region and period, I concluded that the only objective difference that ethnography

could establish, in the chronology and areas of dissemination of symbolic-religious themes, rested solely on the *degree of* frequency with which they had been employed, that is to say, on the more or less faithful adoption that a particular social group, at a given time, had shown for certain of them. The Languedoc, for example, knew the 'moast*ka' as a decorative (and magical?) motif, but it used it much less than the Pays d'Auge or the Alpes, and *much* less in the 18th and 19th centuries than in the Middle Ages. Applying this principle, I have found that the Occitans were more 'sensitive' to the 'cri' with equal sides, the five-pointed star and, above all, the pentagram, than the French from other provinces, and that this predilection was far more pronounced in the 18th and 19th centuries than in the period stretching from the 13th to the 19th century (where the pentagram seems to be most prevalent). All things considered, therefore, given that such signs, discovered at sites inhabited or periodically frequented by the Eothareans, can be dated with some plausibility to the 11th or 12th centuries, that they resemble graffiti or analogous depictions, and that, finally, they do not contradict what little we know of Eotharean doctrine, I believe I may hypothesise that they are of 'Neoplatonic' inspiration or, at the very least, heterodox.

On the other hand, I take it for granted, along with most historians of Catharism, that Bogomilism

influenced Western Catharism in some way, particularly in terms of its metaphysical *ideas*. Without, however, believing in a direct influence of Bogomil art — which appears to be older than the presumed Cathar remains — on the ornamental themes of our monuments, I put forward the (working) hypothesis that the same religious ideas may well have given rise to the same symbolic representations, or to analogous representations, though by no means absolutely identical ones. The Bogomils drew upon the ancient Roman and barbarian thematic traditions, making extensive use of their artistic resources, selecting the motifs that best accorded with their myths and dogmas. Catholicism did the same, drawing on a somewhat different set of archetypes or models; and both have found common ground in the spirit of their respective symbolism. Thus, among the Bogomils there existed a traditional way of representing not the Cross, but the Eternal Spirit, forming with its body a 'cross of life' by stretching out its arms. Everything suggests that the Western Cathars also knew of an 'anthropomorphic' cross of the same kind. A few profiles, or two or three sculptures, attest that it was represented in a geometric, schematic, stylised manner, by a Greek cross — or a figure bearing the solar disc — topping an inverted V; sometimes in the manner PéallBte, as a standing man, not cross-legged, with

legs slightly apart and one arm outstretched, leaning against an *'Initiate's* Cross*'*. *It* therefore seems reasonable to attribute a Cathar origin to these heterodox 'crucifixions' and to the graffiti that depict them.

Whether or not they were Cathars, most of the symbols we have reproduced here probably had a religious or magical significance. But it would be unwise to attempt to specify this, as it is not immediately apparent from the form or the motif that expresses it. Furthermore, we do not know for what purpose these objects were made and, above all, how they were interpreted by their creators. The same geometric figure may, in fact, have three very different meanings: 1. In some cases, it refers only to itself, that is to say, to its own geometric or, if you will, magico-geometric properties: for example, the circle as the sum of the diameters of the circle, or the pentagon as generated by the five-pointed star. — 2. But in other cases, it symbolises something other than itself: an abstract reality—God, the spirit—or a *concrete* one—the sun. And here, of course, there is only a distant connection
— and no resemblance — between the sign and the signified: the cross, as a 'symbol' of the sun; the pentagon, as a symbol of the spirit incarnate in matter (?). — 3. Finally, it is possible that a

abstract stylisation has at times truly conveyed to the mystic's imagination, through a sort of hallucinatory perception, the concrete form, the true appearance of a figure or an object. These 'diacoidalea' must have given the impression of upright figures, whilst the five-pointed stars have often been interpreted as anthropomorphic silhouettes. I believe, therefore, that it would be rash—as indeed one never does in prehistory, when determining whether the outline of a cross, for example, is a simple cross or a dancing man—to decide according to what 'intentionality' these images were conceived in the 12th century, and, consequently, to what extent they were to be regarded as epigraphic art, magical geometry or intellectual symbolism, a 'science' *transcending* the
or the heroism of the concrete for the sake of the schema...

Into which category shall we place the five-pointed star presumed to be Cathar or the pentagram? And how can we know whether the six-petalled rosette represented the aorta of Christ (when two petals were arranged along a vertical axis) or the
— — real or mystical? — (when they were arranged along a horizontal axis)?... We must remain in doubt until the connection between these objects *and Catharism* has been absolutely established, and until more remains have been discovered.

We must, however, list our conjectures. The Cathars, as 'paleo-Christians',

most likely represented the Saving Spirit in the form of the Virgin and the figure of Jesus Christ in the symbolic form of the fish.

Their favoured geometric-symbolic motifs appear to have been the *pentagram* (of Pythagorean tradition?), that is to say, the combination of the five-pointed star, its inner pentagon and its outer pentagon; and all varieties of equilateral stars inscribed within a circle, ranging from *la croix* the simplest (equal to the circle's diameter) to five-spoked, six-spoked, seven-spoked and eight-spoked solar wheels. Whilst the Occitan Cathars sometimes made use of the '*croix* ' with four arms *branc* (the Cross of Languedoc or of Toulouse), this was probably not in reference to the ancient 'Manichaean' cross, which, moreover, is quite different. Rather, like the *Bogomils,* they mainly employed *the rose* with *three 'a's.*

In fact, there must have existed in Occitania two types of anthropomorphic representations—sometimes stylised, sometimes realistic—analogous to those which Bogomilism had, for its part, substituted for the Catholic 'Crucifixions'.

'The Gathariame' comprises five parts or sections. In the first, I have grouped together the objects
— that have long been known in Languedoc, though few in number — which, all things considered, are linked to the Christian iconographic tradition: doves, mystical lambs, *the Virgin Mary*... There are, of course, other Cathar doves besides those I publish in this collection, but they seemed to me too suspect — or dubious — to merit inclusion here. Some are merely 'playful forms of nature'; others, such as the one engraved on the wall of an underground refuge in Albi, do not, in my view, have any religious significance; the doves engraved on the sides of the rivets (Chaubet collection; Montferrier, Ariège) are undoubtedly merely decorative and are certainly no more Cathar than they are Catholic. — As for the 'poienons' which have been pointed out to me in various places, and which I do not reproduce here, it is likely that they are of prehistoric origin.

In the second part, I have included almost all the geometric or stylised symbols that can plausibly be attributed to the Tatha-

name, with the exception of the 'Fax', which I have explained in the entries devoted to the diacoidal motifs; the plain ornamental ones (often comprising more than five fingers), whose Cathar origin is far from obvious; and a few spirals — similar to those which sometimes adorn the Bogo-Mile streets — on which it is difficult to form a valid opinion.

The third section of the work brings together realistic or abstract (schematic) anthropomorphic representations which apparently stem from a Bogomil influence or, rather, as I have said, from an inspiration akin to that expressed in Bogomilism. Most of these are recent discoveries or had hitherto escaped the attention of researchers. It is perhaps towards a comparison of Eatharian and Bogomil themes that research should be directed in future. I did not, however, consider it useful to list all the works of Romanesque art which display characteristics analogous to those of Bogomil sculpture or which appear to draw on the same original theme. On this point, I refer the reader to my previous work: *The Eatharea ***Phenomenon***. Certain folk legends—or rather, those that became so at a fairly early stage—such as those of the Three Kings, the Tree of Good and Evil, the Tree of Piety, and the unicorn, may well only have been translated into sculptural forms during the Romanesque period after having first lost

a Cathar or Cathar-influenced reworking. And it is not impossible that the figure — with its overly broad features — in Romanesque art is, in some way
— indirect — with that of the Bogomil iconography. In the parish church of Mayronnea (Aude) there is a sculpture — admittedly very late in date — depicting a saint with deformed hands, which undoubtedly indicates a survival of the Cathar tradition. If the artists of the**XII**[e] th century sometimes gave their figures giant hands for the sake of exaggerated expressiveness, it may be that they wished thereby to emphasise their supernatural character, and to suggest that they had the power to bless, to heal and, as in primitive art, to bestow the Holy Spirit.

The fourth section, which is by no means the least evocative, summarises the research of Mr Fernand Niel, well known for his fine works (such as *Épure*, *Site*, *Com liietoiris* and **A gaoie and athaxee)*, on the mystical architectural golden ratios, whose existence he has recognised, manifested in the layout of the buildings and the arrangement of the openings, and in relation to the directions of the sun, at the castles of Monteégur and Quéribus. Mr Fernand Niel selected the photographs himself, drew the plans and wrote the explanatory notes: I am grateful to him for having the floor here.

z;æn, although one now finds, in numerous tourist or popular works, abundant series of picturesque photographs

relating, directly or indirectly, to the southern Cathars, I felt it essential, within the framework of this 'Museum of Catharism', to provide several views of the *'inspired'* sites where the Bons-Hommes lived out their mystical adventure, as well as of a few monuments little known to the general public.

Catharism and Christian symbolism

F. Colombo, from Montségur.

Belongs to M' Ftiis, Antiquités, Foix, Ariège. *(Photo: D. H. Phu*

It is a small sculpture carved from soft stone, depicting a dove in flight with outstretched wings. It was discovered in 190û, near the keep at Montségur, by Mr A. Caussou of Lavclanel (Ariège). It measures 0.08 m in length from head to tail, and 0.09 m at its widest point, that is, from one wing tip to the other. Part of the beak and the tip of one wing have been broken off.

Although it does not display any particularly distinctive features in its style, one may, chiefly on the basis of the place where it was found, attribute a Carthaginian origin to it and date it to the 14th century. I do not believe it can be linked, as has sometimes been done, to 14th-century French Protestantism, whose military leaders occupied Montségur on several occasions.

The scroll was exhibited in 1955 in Castres, at the Goya Museum (Catalogue of the exhibition *'History and Iconography of Catharism',* Goya Museum, *Castres,* April–October 1955, no. 100 1).

11. **Another dove from Montségur.**

Terracotta; 0.04 m × 0.03 m.

It is said to have been discovered in 1960, amongst shards of medieval pottery, in the rubble of one of the Cathar huts situated on the northern edge of *the Pech* de Montségur, not far from the castle walls, and, more precisely, in the very same hut where the official excavations of 1904 brought to light a lead pentagram and various metal objects. It is a very crudely made clay dove — shown here from above and from behind — depicted with its wings pressed against its body, and missing its head, tail and feet. The object, which is not particularly distinctive in itself (and deviates from traditional Christian symbolism), is mutilated and could just as easily be mistaken for a Gallo-Roman artefact; or, conversely, for something far less ancient than Catharism. However, the location where it was found and the archaeological context surrounding it lead me to classify it amongst the 'probable' remains of the heresy. — René Nelli Collection. *Photo: Portes.*

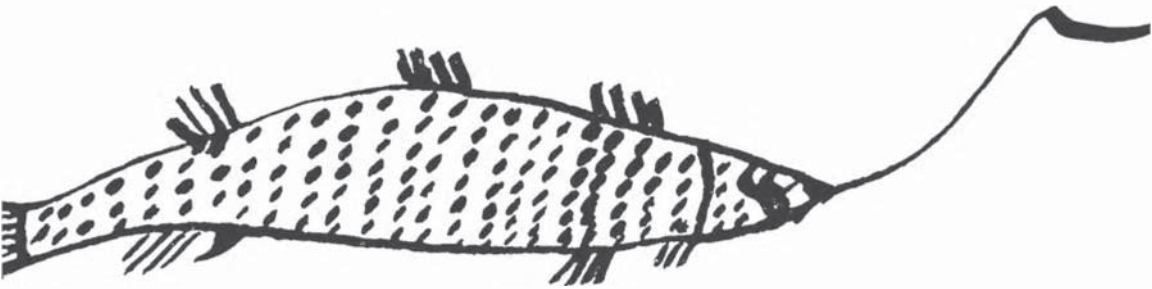
III. The dove of Ussat.

(Photo: Portes)

This object — which is highly interesting — was found some twenty years ago by Mr Gadal, former curator of what is now the Rosicrucian Museum in Ussat (Ariège), on the terrace of one of the Ornolhac caves frequented by the Cathars in the Middle Ages. 11 It consists of a thin bronze plate on which is imprinted, in shallow relief — as if stamped with a die — the image of a dove in full flight. The plate, irregularly cut, measures 0.04 m × 0.03 m, and the imprint of the dove measures 0.01 m × 0.01 m. Of all the Cathar relics, or those presumed to be such, this is undoubtedly one of the least controversial. Like the one at Montségur, this dove — which, incidentally, bears a greater resemb more like a swallow than a dove — is intended to symbolise the Holy Spirit or the Spirit, but it is difficult to say exactly what purpose it might have served as an object. We may be looking at a trial strike. The image, reproduced in several copies on metal plates and medals, was presumably used as an object of piety or as a token of gratitude (?).

Catalogue of the Castrer exhibition, Goya Museum, 1955, no. 107.

— Photographic reproduction in **Saint Dominique**, 159 photographs by Léonard van Matt, text and captions by Marie-Humbert Victaire, O.P.; Desclée de Brouwer, 1957; p. 78. — An image of this column adorns the cover of the journal **Les Cahiers d'études Cathares** (M. Déodat Ro-ché, Arques, Aude).



IV. Ichthys from the Cathar Ritual of Lyon.

The New Testament, translated in the 13th century into the *Provençal* language *followed* by a *Cathar ritual.* Photographic reproduction of the Lyon Manuscript published... by L. Clédat; Paris, 1887.) — Page 7 (Calligraphic ornament at the bottom of the page). This fish appears several times as an ornament at the bottom of the pages of the Cathar ritual. The scribe seems to have accorded it primarily a decorative (traditional) value, but for most 13th-century readers, it must have served as a reminder, as it did for the early Christians, the word *'Ichthys',* that is to say, the initials of Jesus-Christ.

V. Ichthys engraved on stone. Foix Museum.
(Photo: Yan}

The Museum of Foix (Ariège) houses a stone roughly hewn stone bearing a fine, deep-carved

and deep) a schematic but clearly recognisable image of a fish. Dimensions: 0.30 m x 0.18 m. This stone was until recently embedded in the retaining wall of the old cemetery at Ussat (our photograph shows it in situ).

This engraving does not date from prehistoric times, nor can it be described as
'early Christian', except, of course, to the extent that Catharism itself was still in existence in the 13th century. It is certainly of Cathar inspiration and depicts Christ in the symbolic form of *the ichthys.*

Catalogue of the Exhibition *'History and Photography of Catharism',* no. 109.

VI. Floor tile (Private collection)

On a retrouvé récemment dans les ruines du château de Puivert (rebâti au e siècle, mais dont certaines parties datent du XIIIe), derrière une cheminée numentale, un carreau de céramique grossière (abandonné par les rebâtis- urs?) qui paraît provenir de l'ancien pavement. C'est une plaque carrée Decorated with a diamond shape, the centre of which is occupied by a sort of sun **surrounding a Greek cross, inscribed within a circle of twelve fish; on the surface are the words '**

VII. Lamb's head, sculpture in sandstone.

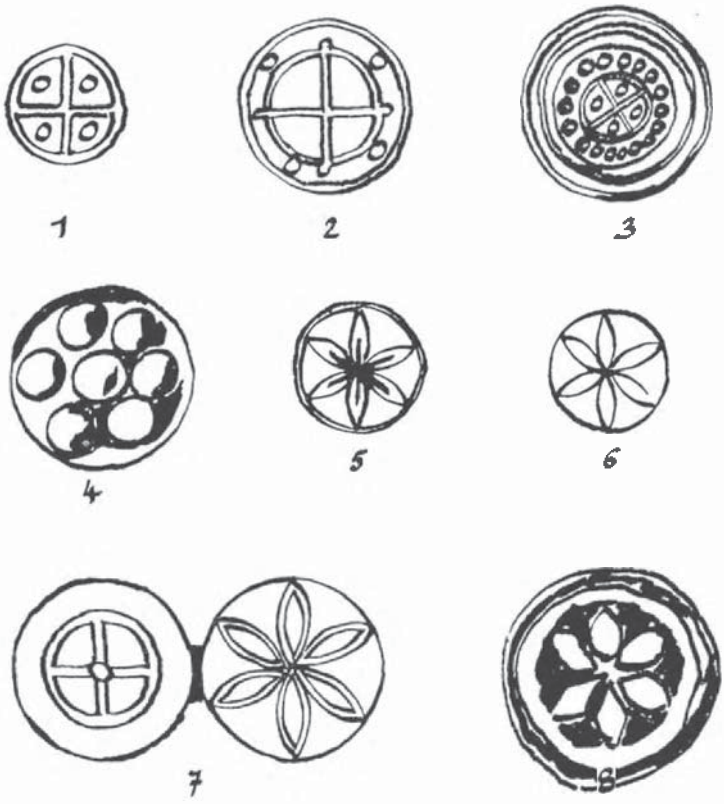
Dimensions: 0.12 m x 0.08 m (Goya Museum, Castres) *(Jack-Photo).*

This sculpture (10th–12th centuries), which was featured in the exhibition **History and Iconography of the Calhazine**, under entry 98 in the catalogue, was discovered at Sainte-Julienne (Roquecourbe, Tarn) during the excavations carried out in 1952–54 by Ms Elizabeth Poulain with the assistance of Mr and Mrs Samuel Marc-Man Noël.

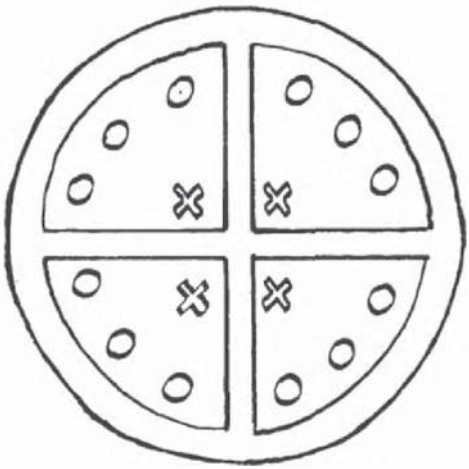
Although of little significance in itself in terms of heterodox symbolism, this sculpture must nevertheless be linked to Catharism due to the more revealing — and most likely Cathar — archaeological context provided by the site of Sainte-Julienne (where Mr and Mrs Marc-Manoël continue, even today, to carry out research of the utmost interest).

Symbols and geometric stylisations

VIII. Some of the **Gallo-Roman or barbarian decorative** motifs **from which the religious symbolism of Catharism appears** to have **drawn its inspiration most frequently.**

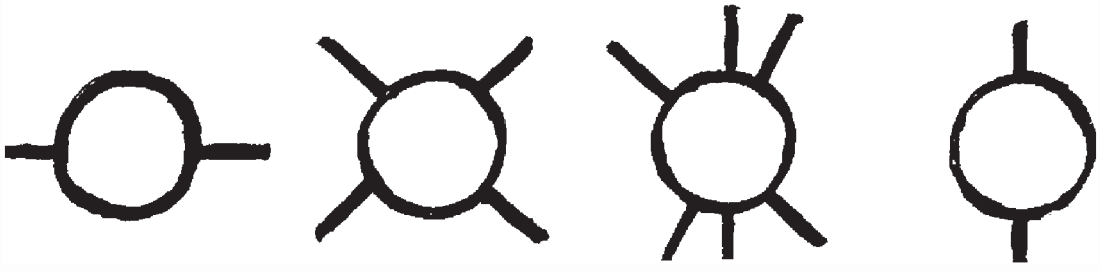


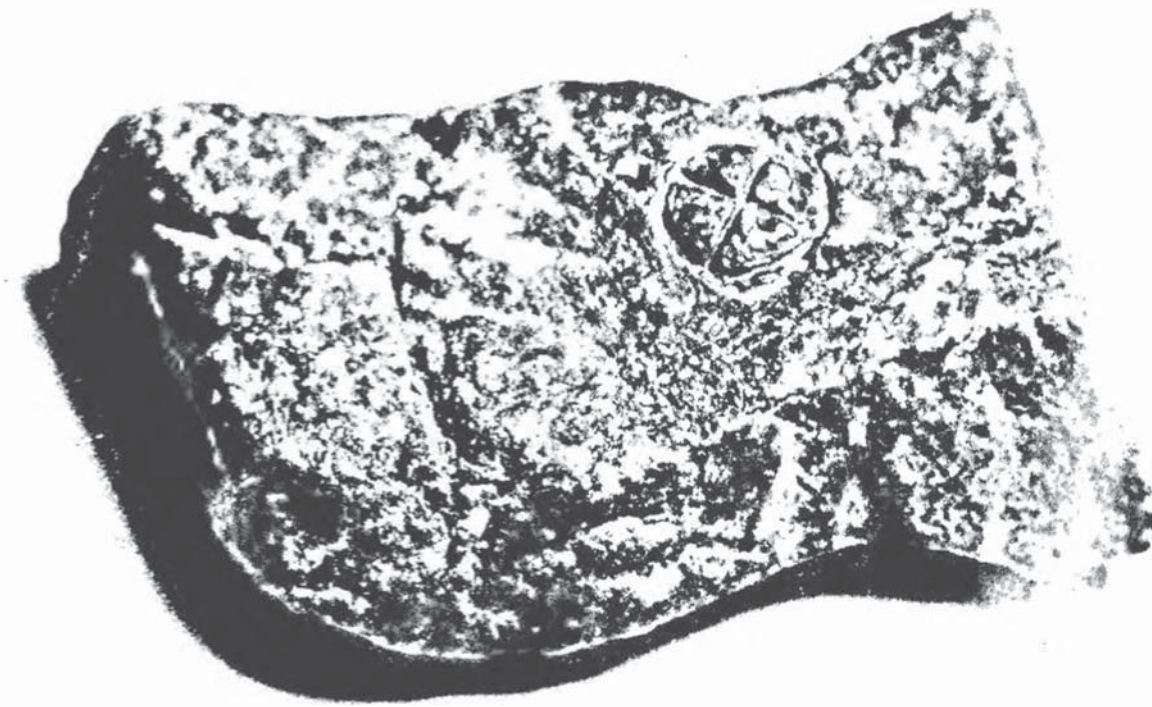
1. 2. *Roman pottery decoration: a cross flanked by four points. [The workshop of the Gallo-Roman potter at Galaxie in Lombez (Gers)* by Mr Paul Mesplé (Bibliography, No. 19).
3. *Lead ingot found at Montségur* (1964 excavations).
4. *Barbarian* geometric *decoration* (Visigothic? 6th or 7th centuries) on a ceramic fragment (Montségur excavations, 1964).
5. *b. Six-petalled rosette (*Visigothic tombs at Nîmes), in: *The Lurs Sarcophagus in* Provence… by F. Benoît (Bibliography, no. 2).
7. *Lead* cross *found* at *Montsé gttr* (Private collection).
8. Six-petalled rosette adorning the front of a Bogomil sarcophagus at Brotnice. *The Art of the Bogomils* (Bibliography, No. 3), Pl. 15.



9 Discoidal stele at Marquein (Aude). Dusan, *Turbulary crosses of the Lauragais* (Bibliography, No. 12), fig. 11.

IX. Circles and solar crosses (Graffiti from the caves of Ussat)

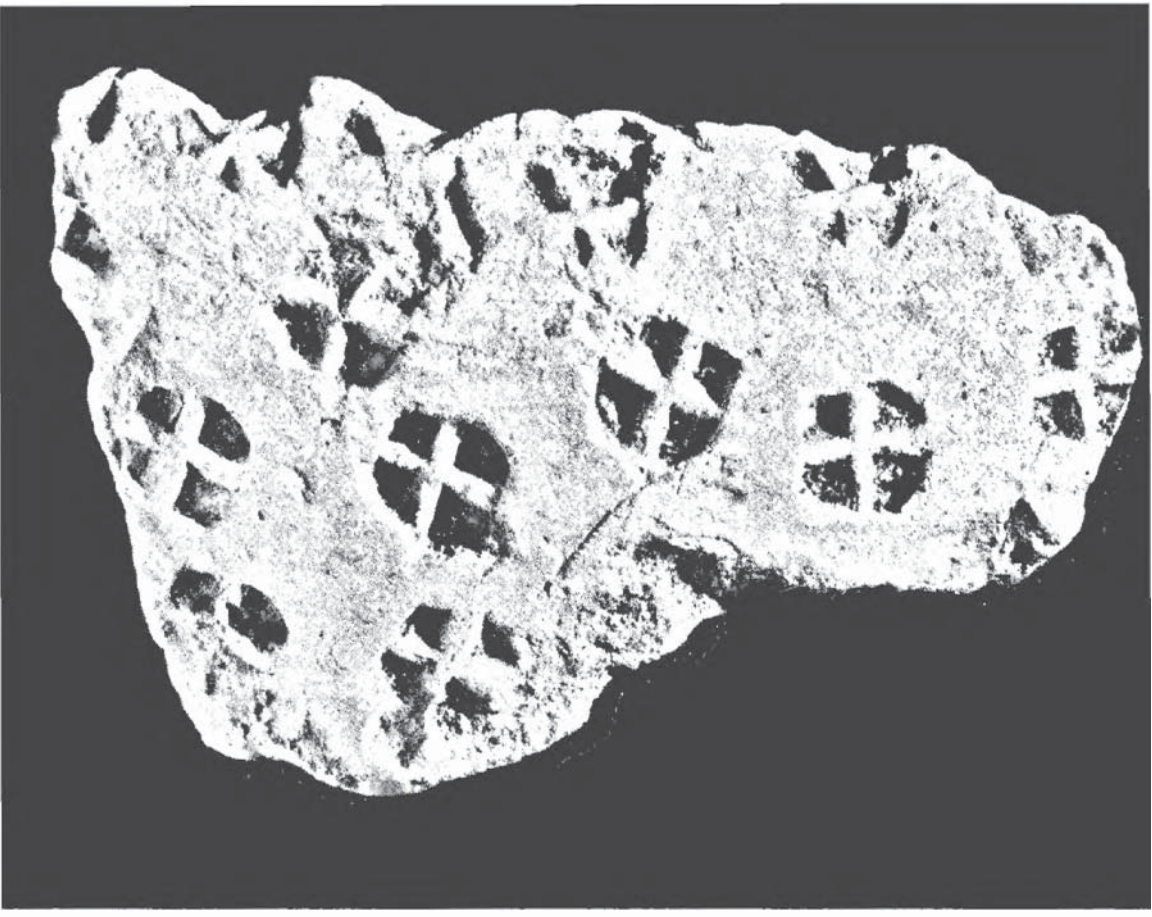




X. Greek cross inscribed within a circle.

Near the mass grave situated below the staircase leading to the west terrace of Mont-Ségur Castle, Mr Blanc collected, in 1958, a fragment of rock (0.05 m × 0.03 m; thickness: 0.01 m) which had been carved out on part of its surface so as to reveal, in relief, a small Greek cross inscribed within a circle (height: 0.01 m). — A. Blanc: *'Les mines de Montségur* femoigrierif', Cahier d'ét. cath. No. 3ó, 9th year, 1958–59; pp. 203–204; photograph (Figure 8).

A Greek cross, quite similar, is still visible at Montségur, carved into the wall of the cave known as the *Tambour*.



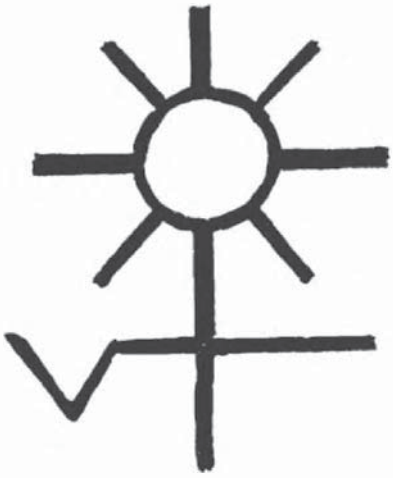
X **I. Greek crosses inscribed** within **circles** *(Photo: Portes.)*

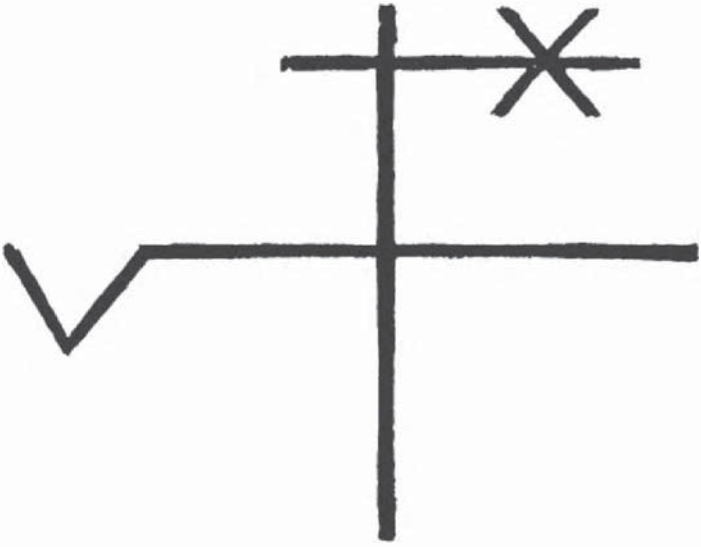
On a pottery fragment found at Rennes-le-Château (Aude), in a medieval context, probably Cathar (?), by Mr Clotte, there are fourteen symbols quite similar to that in the previous figure: Greek crosses standing out in relief on hollow circular surfaces. Dimensions of the shard: 0.08 m × 0.05 m; height of the crosses: 0.01 m.

XII. Graffiti from the Lombrives Cave (Ussat, Ariège).

A solar cross (Fig. 1). — A heterodox cross, one arm of which ends in a *Khi*

These two symbols appear to predate an authentically Cathar tradition.





XIII. An **18th-century gravestone.** — Mazamet (Tarn) *(Cliché Nougaret).*

It is not uncommon to find, amongst antique dealers in the Albi region, *crucifixes* on which Christ, in place of the face, bears the image of a radiant sun.
Some of these were exhibited in 1955 at the *Goya* Museum in Castres (*Exhibition Catalogue,* no. 112, p. 21). Unfortunately, we do not know the origin of these crosses or even their approximate date (they appear to be relatively modern: 18th century). They cannot be a kind of representation of the radiance of the Host. They are, without a doubt, 'solar' Christs. But who honoured them in the Albigeois region in the 17th or 18th century? The Protestants?

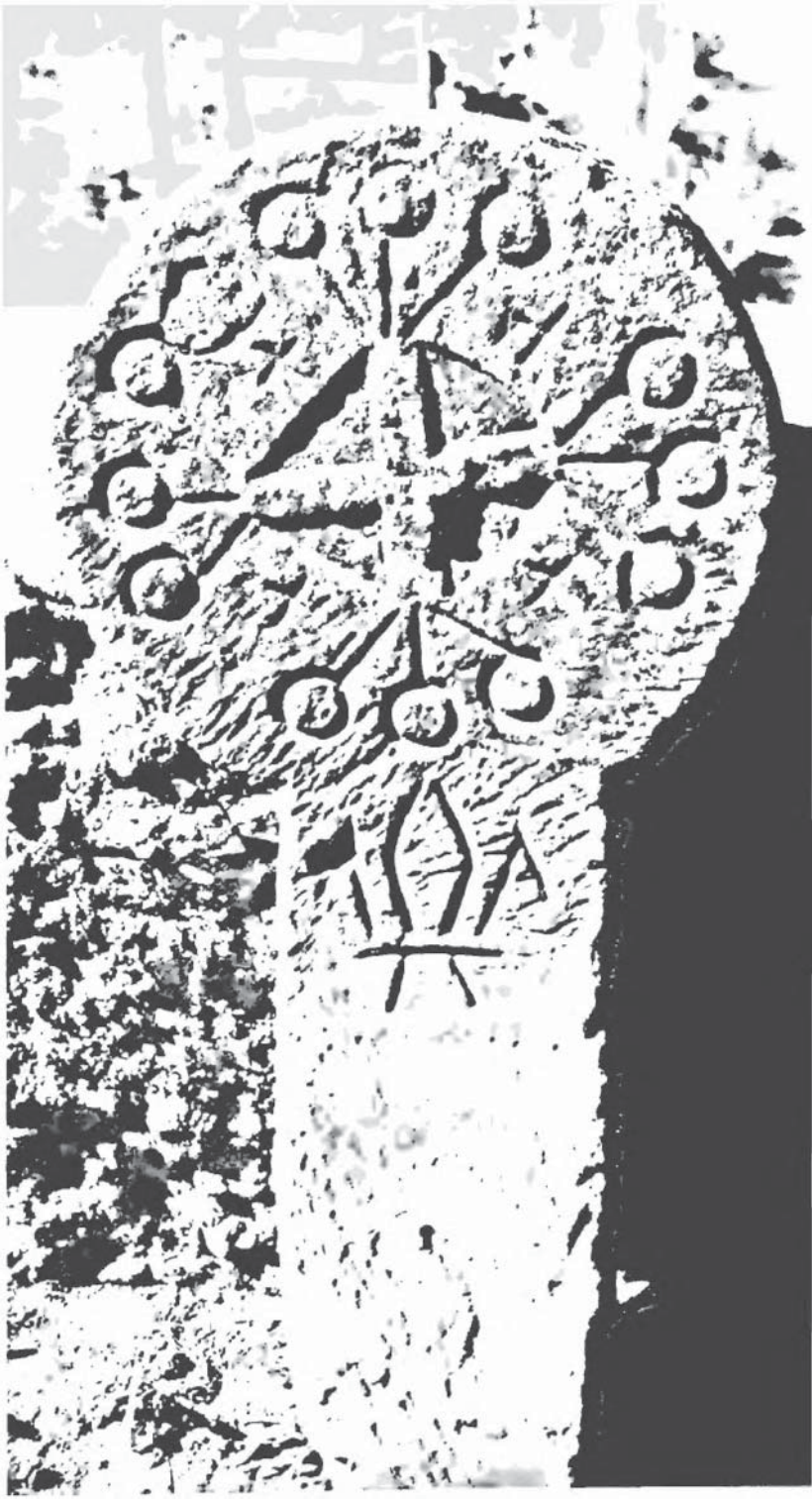
In the public garden in Mazamet (Tarn) there is a sort of sarcophagus, or tombstone, which is regarded as 'Cathar' but certainly is not; it is dated 1756. Engraved upon it is a Latin cross set upon a circle (the globe?), the upper part of which is occupied by a radiant sun. This funerary monument is likely Protestant and dates from roughly the same period as the crucifixes I have just mentioned. One cannot fail to recognise in it the persistence of a Cathar (?) tradition tending to represent the Eternity of Christ rather than Christ being tortured. Christ's head is formed by a small Greek cross (extending from the Latin cross) inscribed within the radiant circle. And the arms of the Latin cross do indeed appear here to correspond to the arms of the stylised divine figure. (See fig. XLV.)

XIV. Discoidal stele with a Greek cross
(Avigrionet, Haute-Garonne)

The disc-shaped stele has often been used as a funerary monument in various periods, in many countries, and since the earliest antiquity. It appears to have been a tradition in certain Occitan regions. It is possible that in the 13th century — particularly in the Lauragais
— the Cathars may have used it, just as the Catholics did, but decorating it with symbols specific to their religion (such as a cross with equal arms, a five-pointed star, etc.).

XV. Disc-shaped stele from Baraigne (Limoux Museum, Aude).

It is the most interesting of all those that have survived. On the front it bears a traditional cross with equal arms and on the reverse a weaver's shuttle (it is known that weavers from the Languedoc were very often affiliated with Catharism). But its esoteric nature stems above all from the decorative additions it has undergone, which suggest that it was reused in a rather unorthodox, if not Cathar, spirit. Clearly visible on the front, in the right-hand corner, is a filiform cross with twelve rounded arms (a reminder of the Manichaean cross?), and on the reverse, a **five-pointed** star.



XVI. Disc-shaped stele.
(Cemetery
(Mont Ferrand, Aude)
(Photo: R. Dorbes.)

This stele appears to date from after the Cathar period (12th–13th centuries), and the cross with twelve rounded arms that adorns it is certainly not 'Manichaean': it is borrowed from the coat of arms of the Counts of Toulouse (the so-called • of Languedoc). It is of particular interest particularly for the fleur-de-lis — or is it an iris? — which completes its decoration. Is this simply the royal lily or the more esoteric flower which appears in *Cathar iconography* (13th century) and on numerous Bogomil monuments?

(See fig. XXX I.)

XVII. Disc-shaped stele at **Montferrand** (Aude)
(Photograph by R. Dorbes).

It seems that the disc-shaped stelae—most of which, in my opinion, are by no means Cathar in origin—nevertheless appeared somewhat heretical, or at least unorthodox, to devout Catholics, who, in certain cases, felt compelled to 'exorcise' them by adding to their central decoration a roughly carved Latin cross (here: on the base, beneath the disc).

XVIII. Disc-shaped stele at Montferrand (Photo: R. *Dorbes).*

Graffiti added later to the original stele (at the base of the disc, at the top of the shaft): two small Greek crosses and a tree. Perhaps these graffiti reflect an ancient Cathar tradition. The tree of life (Revelation 11:7), like
'the river of living water' (*Rev.* 21:1), is a mystical image frequently cited in Cathar texts. But who can say whether this is the professional emblem of a gardener or a symbol that has retained its esoteric significance?

xlv. Greek cross, sandstone; dimensions 0.24 x 0.23 m

This cross, with equal, flared arms, was discovered at the foot of the tomb of the 'plague victim' (buried in quicklime — because she had died of a contagious disease —) in the cemetery of the Cathar nuns of Sainte-Juliane (13th century).

Coys Museum.

Exhibition catalogue: flint. ci fcoriogr. *du cathar.* -. no. 96. — See no. 127 in the catalogue (cast of the body impression of the 'plague victim').

XX. Greek cross, sandstone;

dimensions: 0.12 x 0.20 m.

Heavily damaged, this Greek cross with flared arms was found at the head of the tomb of the 'plague victim' in the Cathar cemetery at Sainte-Juliane (12th century).

Goya Museum.

Exhibition Catalogue: *History and Iconography of Catharism,* no. 97.

XXI. A gravestone cross of heterodox tradition

Dated: 16 August 1779.
(Old cemetery at Merens-le-Haut, Ariège.)

CCCII. Cross set in a slab of ecktste (roofing slate?) *(Jack-Pfioto).*

Found during excavations at Sainte-Juliane and now held at the *Coyn* Museum, this carved cross (14th century) was included, amongst objects presumed to be Cathar, in the exhibition: *'History and Iconography* of *Catharism', no. 104.*

Compare with the cross engraved on the window jamb cladding at Pieusse Castle (Aude). — (See the following figure, no. **XXIII.**

XXIII. Graffiti from Pieusse. Bolted cross.

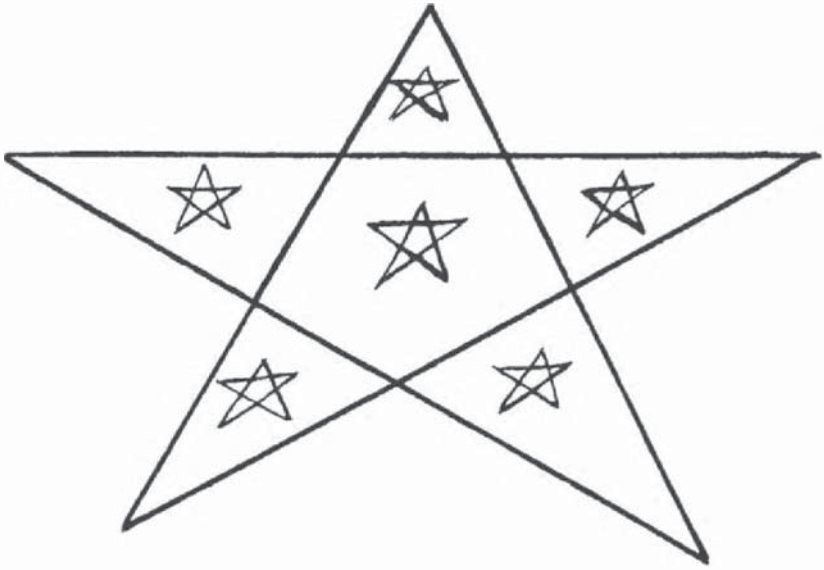
(Photograph by Noël Vaquié).

Finally, one can visit the ruins at Pieusse (near Limoux, Aude), - the imposing structures of the former feudal period of the 12th century, linked to the 13th. It was precisely in the great hall of this castle, which the Count of IX had regained possession of in 1221, that a Cathar council presided over by Ilhabert de Castres took place in 1222, during which, amidst a large gathering (around or so), the appointment of new bishops was carried out, including that of Benoît de Rmes for the diocese of Razès. Subsequently, the lordship of •usse was awarded to the archbishops of Narbonne, who had a small, more comfortable castle built in the centre of the village and abandoned the old one.

In 1964, Messrs Sarda-Allens (the castle's owners) and Mestre, whilst carrying out archaeological research in the keep, called upon Mr Noël Quié, an editor at **Midi-Libre** and an excellent archaeologist. Vaquié had the good fortune to discover, in the embrasure of a window in the great hall, a series of engravings carved with a knife into the stucco cladding (which was very hard and had undoubtedly been altered during the Middle Ages)//ii i of the highest quality, which he immediately set about examining with the assistance of Messrs Urbain Gilbert and Guy Rancoule, members of the *Aude Society of Scientific Studies* and specialists in these matters.

This study is far from complete. I would like to thank the owners of the château, as well as Messrs Vaquié, Gibert and Rancoule, for providing me with these previously unpublished photographs (Figs. XXIII, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII, XIX, €X and for allowing me to publish them here.

A ball-headed cross, each of its three ends terminating in three small diverging prongs *similar to those of the so-called 'Marichêenne' cross*. Left: geometric symbol. At the base of the cross, a five-pointed star (unclear). On the right: a female figure (?).



KXIV. Six-pointed pentagram.

(Cave known as the Grand Master's Cave, Ussat, Ariège. Surveyed by A. Gadal).

This graffiti is the most characteristic and the most beautiful of all those that have come down to us. It is, of course, impossible to assert that it is the work of a Cathar hand, but everything suggests that pentagrams (that is to say, figures formed of five lines or having five vertices) played an important role in Cathar and Bogomil symbolism. Mr Alojz Benac counts the five-pointed star amongst the symbols that appear, along with many others, on the *stecaks* of Yugoslavia, • the five-pointed star, he says, *'in Bogomil art,* XXXIV, which sometimes—albeit quite rarely—appears on our monuments, and which is said to date back to the very ancient Pythagorean tradition in the West'.

In Occitania, together with the pentagon which it encompasses—or which surrounds it—and which is sometimes depicted on its own, it constitutes the symbol most frequently found on monuments believed to be Cathar.

XXV. Cross of Antugnac, Aude.

(Photograph by Noël Vaquié, 'Midi-Libre'.)

Is this a five-pointed cross from the Cathar tradition?).

— One might wonder whether Cathar art, which oscillates so curiously between pure geometric abstraction and the geometric stylisation of the concrete, might not have interpreted the five-pointed star as a hema *anthro portier phrquc* (a figure with arms and legs outstretched, inscribed within an undepicted pentagon).

XXVI. Graffiti
at Pieusse Castle
(Aude)

(Photograph by Noël Vaq itié).

A five-pointed star accompanied by various geometric symbols. On the right-hand side, a hand is clearly distinguishable, and below the hand, further down, a sort of hopscotch (?)

XXVII. Graffiti at Pleusse Castle (Aude)

(Photograph by Noël Vaq itié).

A five-pointed star accompanied by geometric figures (difficult to interpret with certainty). At the bottom left, a roughly drawn sword.

XXVIII. Graffiti du château de Pieusse, Aude (*Cliché Noël Vaquié*)

Figures géométriques — entre l'étoile à huit rais (en bas, à gauche) et l'étoile, plus petite, à six rais — qui est peut-être un *Khi* — : une sorte de main (dont les doigts sont trop nombreux). L'ensemble est désigné sur la photo par l'index de l'opérateur.

XXIX. Graffiti
at Pieusse Castle,
Aude
(Photograph by Noël Vaquié).

Geometric ornamentation or a female figure? — On the left: a sort of large leaf with veins arranged in a herringbone pattern.

XXX. Graffiti from the Pleusse ch$lnau, Aude.
(Photograph by Noël Vaquié).

The inscription here is badly damaged. The geometric figures are difficult to interpret and, particularly in the central section, rather indistinct.

XXXI. Les fleurs de lys.

In the 13th century, when Alphonse de Poitiers, following his marriage to the daughter of Raymond VII, the last count of the House of Toulouse, acquired the possessions of that dynasty, the fleurs-de-lis, the royal coat of arms, spread throughout the Languedoc as a decorative motif. We are familiar with the famous enamelled candelabrum (13th century), on which the arms of Alphonse de Poitiers are joined to those of the Counts of Toulouse. It is certain that, in most cases, the fleurs-de-lis engraved on the disc-shaped stelae are those of the House of France.

But these fleurs-de-lis — or iris flowers — drawn on the margins of *the Cathar Ritual — where* it is hardly likely that they refer to the royal emblem — and on the Bogomil monuments of Yugoslavia, where it is evident that they belong to an entirely different tradition... We reproduce here (Figs. 1 and 2) the fleurs-de-lis from the *Cathar* Ermel*;* that from Baraigne (Fig. 3; disc-shaped stele, according to B. Dusan: **Tomb* Crosses *of* Languedoc*) and that from Belpech (Fig. 4, disc-shaped stele, *ibid.,* B. Dusan).

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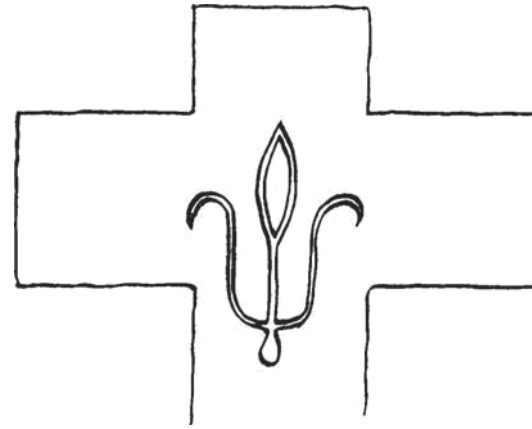
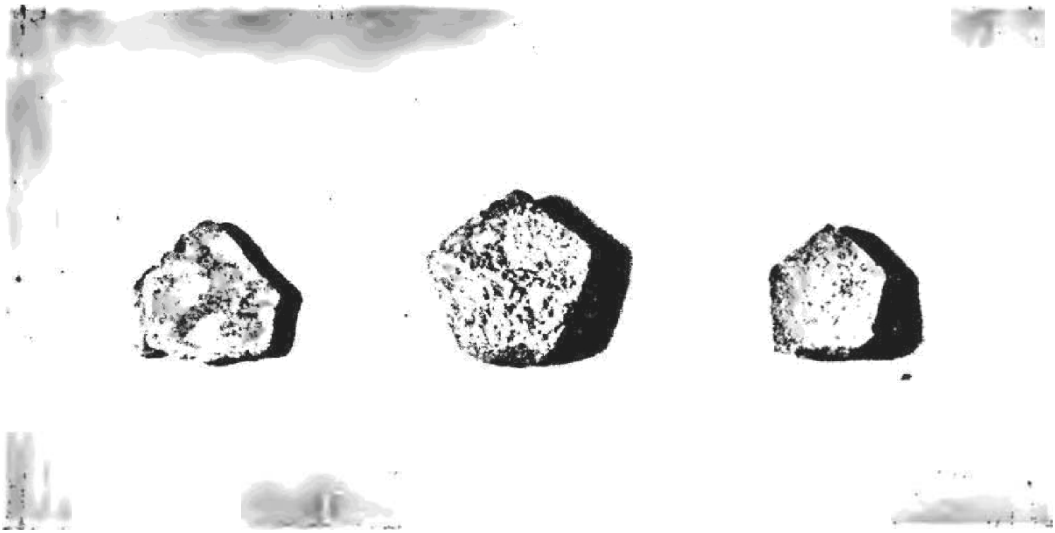


XXXII. The rock-carved pentagon at Ussat.

On one wall of the large cave known as Bect Idem (Ussut, Ariügc) one can see this large petroglyph, in which a man is depicted with one leg outstretched and the other *bent at the knee.* Deeply carved into the rock, this carving, partly natural and partly artificial, bears marks not typical of the style, notably at four of its corners where recesses have been carved to serve as footholds and handholds. One might venture the hypothesis that the Cathars of Ussat had recognised a particular symbolic value in this figurativea ritual object — undoubtedly much older than their religion and, in all likelihood, linked to Proto-Pyrenean history — which they surrounded with a certain reverence.

XXXIII. Portable pentagrams.

It is not uncommon to find, on the surface, in the caves of Us-sat fortified by the Cathars, and especially in the one known as Bethlehem, small pentagrams, measuring on average between 0.03 m and 0.04 m, more or less regular in shape, carved into flat stones



or in pottery shards undoubtedly dating from the Middle Ages.

These are often simply the result of nature or chance; as the shards break repeatedly, they frequently take on this pentagonal shape, but it is undeniable that certain ones — notably those made of stone — bear traces of retouching. Should they be attributed to Catharism?

One is led to associate them, on the one hand, with the *stone Peritagram* in the Bethlehem Cave (fig. XXXI I), and, on the other hand, with the *lead Pentagram* discovered in 1904 at Mont-Ségur (fig. XXXVI).

XXXIV. Pentagram from Lastours.

This small lead object, which is undoubtedly a work of craftsmanship, measures just one centimetre in height. The photograph shows it greatly enlarged. It was found in 1965 by Mr Gilbert Costeplane in the ruins of Cabaret Castle (Lastours, Aude). We present it here with all due reservations, as there is nothing to date or authenticate it. If it does indeed represent the 'Cathar' pentagram, it is to be compared with the one—of the same workmanship—discovered at Montségur by the Ariège Speleologists.

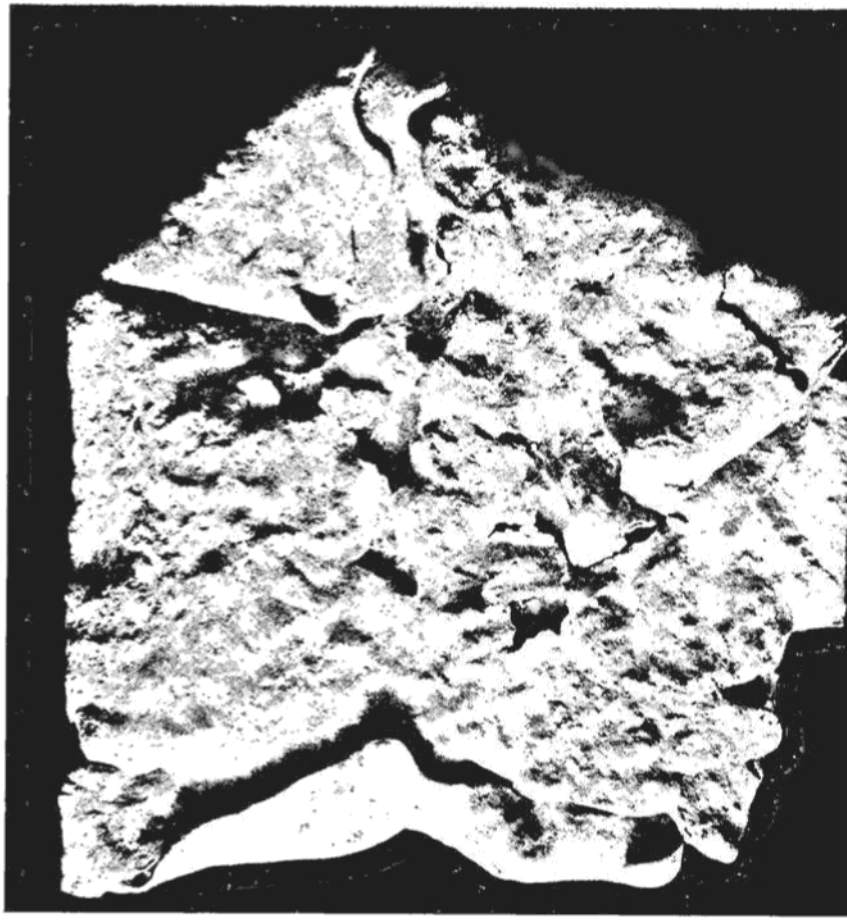
9g

XXXV. Pentagram engraved on a rock, Ussat (Ariège).

Photograph provided by the Rosicrucian Museum in T/ssaf.

This small monument is situated not far from Ussat, in a sunken lane. It is a rock (which appears to have formed the back wall of a hut that has now disappeared, though some remains are still visible) and which itself quite clearly takes *the shape of a pentagram.* It measures 0.60 m by 0.70 m. Engraved into it is a smaller pentagram (0.20 m by 0.20 m), the lower corners of which are, admittedly, slightly rounded.

Should this symbol be linked to the large pentagon in the cave (Fig. XXXI I) and the small lead pentagon from Montségur **(fig. XXXVI**)?



XXXVI. — The lead pentagram from Montségur. *(See A. Deschamps.)*

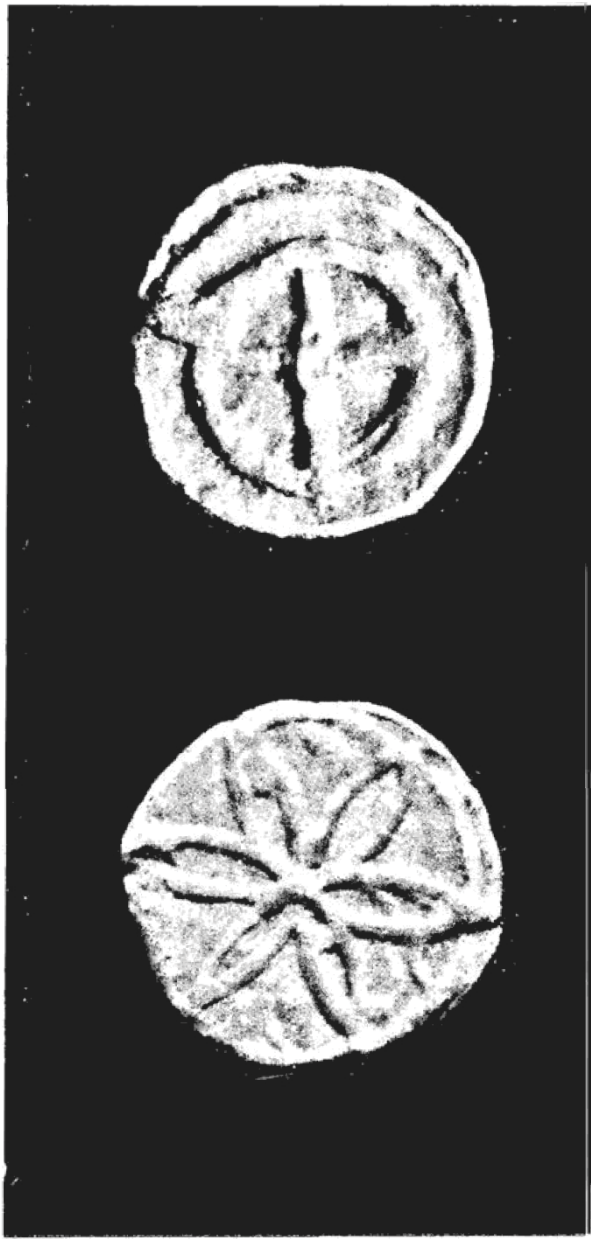
Discovered in 1964 by Mr Deschamps and the team of speleologists responsible for the excavations at Montségur, in one of the Cathar huts adjacent to the northern wall of the keep, this pentagram is undoubtedly the most striking artefact to have been unearthed to date.

First published by Messrs Deschamps and Roché (‘*Discoveries at Montségur’*, see Bibliography, no. 9), then again, with the inventor’s permission, by Mr René Nelli *(Les Cathares,* Paris, 1905), it is now well known to specialists.

It is more or less regular on its main face (measuring 0.13 x 0.12 m), except where wear and impact have slightly distorted its edges. Here, the explanation of chance cannot apply, as it does for portable stone or ceramic pentagons. This object could only have originated from a deliberate, human intention to produce it. It is hard to imagine a Cathar giving a lead plate such a singular shape for any *practical* purpose (to make it take up less space, for example) or for any other reason. (Moreover, the ‘yen’ would betray here a ‘favourite preoccupation’ whose unconscious roots could only be mystical). We must face the facts: as can be seen in our photograph, the roughly rectangular sheet of lead has been bent and refolded—in a manner that is, incidentally, not all that simple—and the folded sections have been hammered to give the front face its pentagonal shape.

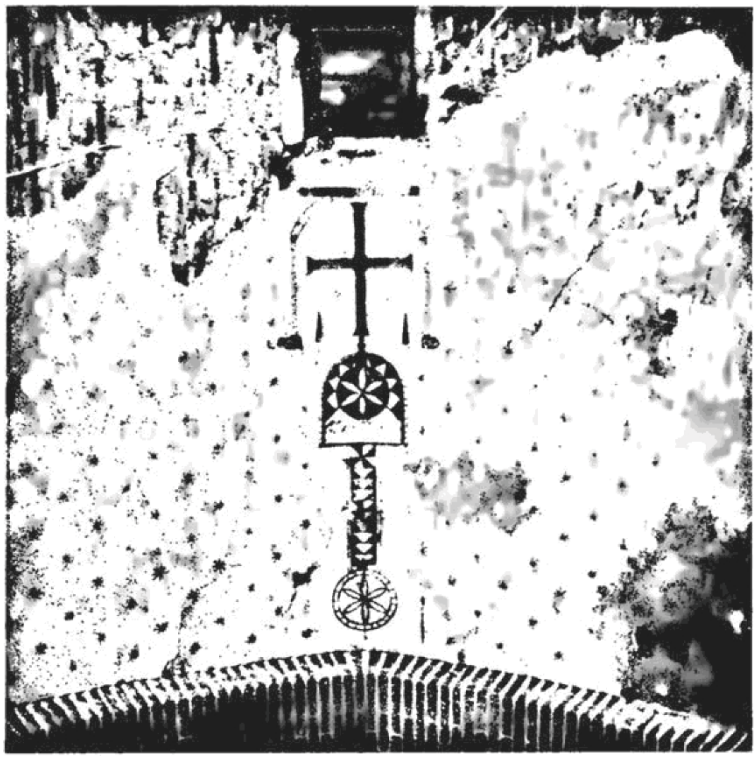
XXXVII. Lead ingots found at Montségur.

(Photograph by A. Deschamps).



These so-called ‘mereaux’, discovered in fairly large numbers at Montségur (Deschamps Collection; R. Nelli Collection), pose a problem. I have personally asked French numismatists whether they had encountered similar coins in other regions: all responses have been negative (to date). It therefore seems quite reasonable to attribute them — provisionally — to the Cathars of 1209–1244. Nothing in the symbolism of these coins contradicts this attribution: a Greek cross on the obverse; a six-petalled rosette on the reverse. Undoubtedly, as I have said previously, these symbols are by no means unique to Catharism. The six-petalled rosette adorns many Visigothic and even Merovingian objects and monuments (the belt buckle from Gibel, Haute-Garonne; the marble bas-relief in the Narbonne Museum depicting the *Triumph of the Cross,* etc.). But it seems that the 13th-century Cathars — as indeed did the Bogomils — adopted them, endowing them with a new (undoubtedly more mystical) significance that is impossible to pinpoint.

It is worth noting that the Greek cross, inscribed within a circle, bears a large, clearly marked dot at the intersection of its arms. It would be rash to see in this a graphic remnant of the rose that occupies the centre of the ancient Manichaean ‘rose-cross’.



XXXVIII. Six-petalled rosettes.

(Church of the Knights Templar, Montsaunês (Haute-Garonne).

Here, at , we present—purely for comparison's sake—a photograph of one of the frescoes from the Templar church at Montsaunés, where, beneath the image of the cross, there are two six-petalled rosettes exactly like the one decorating the reverse side of the Montségur window panes. It is possible that for the Cathars — as later for the Templars — this rosette, oriented along a vertical axis and two axes forming an 'X', simply represented *Christ (iota* and *khi).*

Not all the rosettes depicted — often in *grau fiti* — on monuments believed to be Cathar in origin — and carved on Bogomil *stetak* — are oriented according to the *Chi-Rho.* Many feature two axes crossing to form an 'X' and a *horizontal* axis. It is clear that their symbolic meaning — if they had one — must not have been the same. In the **first** case, they were *Chrismons;* in the second, solar wheels (images of the *Cosmic* Christ*).*

Cathar symbolism and the religious themes of Bogomilism

XIX. Anthropomorphic crosses from Lombrives (Ussat, Ariège). — Graffiti.

In the Lombrives cave — now largely worn away — there are numerous graffiti depicting a silhouette that is both human and cross-shaped. On some of them, a circle occupies the intersection of the arms of the cross; on others, the circle replaces the upper vertical arm. These graffiti are neither prehistoric nor protohistoric in origin:
they certainly date from the 13th century and are clearly intended to represent *crosses;* the circle they contain rules out the possibility that they are merely trivial and clumsy stylisations of the human form. We believe they are sketches, or drafts, of *anthropomorphic crosses.*

Perhaps the crosses *in the shape of a 'Tan'* — there is a very curious example in Termes and another, carved on the holy water font in the church of Saint-Marcel (near Tarn) — were, in some cases, used in a non-orthodox manner by the Cathars: they might have reminded them of their own crosses, where the disc takes the place of the upper vertical arm. But this disc is rarely depicted (see, however, Figure XLV); and most of the 'Tan' crosses in the South of France, attributed to Catharism, appear to us to be entirely Catholic (they are found, in particular, on the boundary markers delimiting the territories of the *Antonine* monks*).*

If we mention the 'heterodox' *cross* here, it is because it appears
•z often on Yugoslav *stec'as* and is also carved on the
sarcophagus — of Bogomil appearance — at Lurs-Domazan (France) (fig. XL).

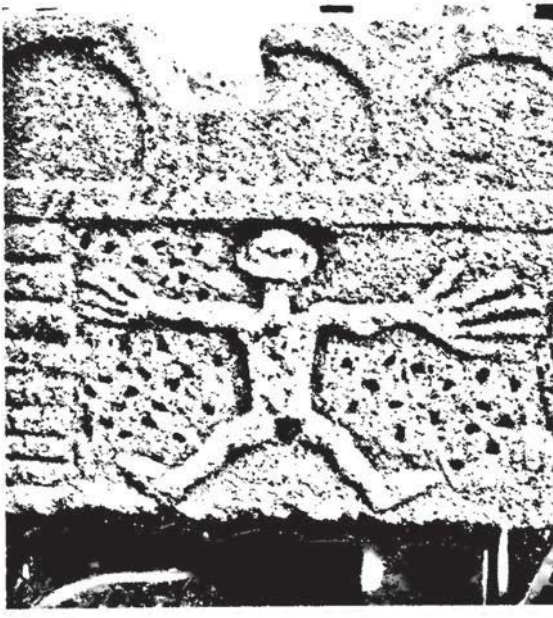
XL. The sarcophagus of Domazan (Gard). — *Photographs by Professor Gutman.*

Among Mr Gutman's collection in Domazan is this curious sarcophagus from Lurs (Basses-Alpes), where it served as a table in a farmhouse until around 1930. At first glance, the resemblance of its ornamentation to that of Bogomil monuments is striking (rosettes, spirals, the Tau symbol, and above all two figures, one of whom spreads his arms and legs to form a Khi, whilst the other holds out his broad hands in the manner of Bosnian heroes or the Christ of *Les Cassés* (Languedoc). As on the Bogomil stelae—miles, an arch is depicted beside it.

According to Mr Fernand Benoît *(Bibliography,* no. 2), this sarcophagus is believed to be Christian and dates from the 7th or 8th century. The motifs—whether realistic or geometric—that adorn it are thought to stem from barbarian traditions, notably Visigothic or, later, Merovingian.

However, there remains this inexplicable connection between its subject matter and that of the Bogomils. It is impossible to accept that it was *directly* influenced by Bosnian art. (The Yugoslav stelae are, on the whole, more recent than the presumed Cathar monuments and, above all, than this sarcophagus.) The only explanation that can be put forward is that Cathar religious symbolism drew inspiration *from the same pre-Roman elements* as those that became fossilised in Bogomilism until the 14th century. There is therefore nothing to prevent the possibility that, by virtue of *the indisputable* dogmatic and mythical similarities between their theories, the Cathars and the Bogomils may have invented, or rediscovered—without having consulted one another—a similar symbolism, drawing on barbarian—or even Roman—decorative motifs that were quite similar but not exactly identical.

In that case, the significance of the Lurs-Domazan sarcophagus would need to be reconsidered. Perhaps it is not as old as Mr F. Benoit believes. Perhaps it is archaic only in terms of its style (which is, in fact, traditional). — In any case, it would be impossible not to mention here this singular monument which, if it is truly of Cathar inspiration, poses very serious problems. It is the only one I know of in Occitania where the resemblance to the 'st ecat'—whether coincidental or 'induced'—and although we cannot pinpoint the cause—is immediately apparent to the observer. Messrs O. Bihal, J. Merin and A. Benac were themselves struck by this resemblance and, on page XV of **L'Art des Bogorniles*,* they provide a photograph of the French sarcophagus.



.I. Bogomil theme:
the hunter
i the great evil.

idirnl ja, H e i- z é g o-
vine orientale)

i compare with the
-decoration featuring
broad irises on the
Lurs-Domazan
sarcophagus. (There
was the presence on
the front of the *stele*
of the six-petalled
solar wheel

XLII. ‘The House of the Stag’, Roquecourbe, Tarn.

Photograph exhibited in 1955 at the Goya Museum, Castres (Exhibition *on Catharism*: *Art and Iconography 1*.

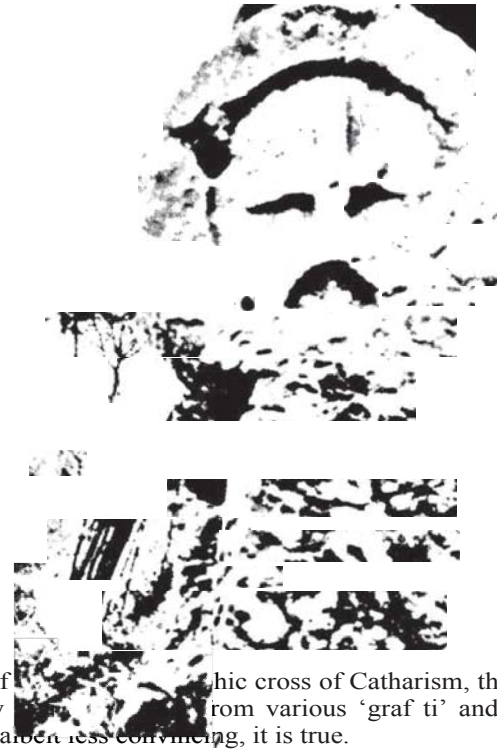
A revival of the old Romanesque and Bogomil theme in the mid-14th century.

XLII I. The discoidal stele of Pezens.

In the small Carolingian chapel of Sainte-Madeleine, near Pezens (Aude), a barely rough-hewn disc-shaped stele was placed, relatively recently, from the nearby (and disused) cemetery of the former leprosarium. Its decoration consists of a sort of geometric figure formed by a Greek cross — the upper arm of which flares out — surmounting an inverted V (a triangle with its base missing). This stele has been retouched as if, after the fact, someone had sought to transform the symbol into a Greek cross inscribed within a circle. The lower right-hand corner has been hollowed out, and the inverted V has been chiselled away so as to separate it from the lower arm of the Greek cross. Only close inspection reveals that it does, in fact, have two 'legs',

XLIV. The disc-shaped stele from Labarthe. *(Photograph: 'Editions de Delphes'.)*

In January 1964, whilst ploughing their fields, the owners of Labarthe Castle (near Belflou, Aude) discovered a 12th-century cemetery, which had long been known but whose exact location had remained unknown. They unearthed this disc-shaped stele, which depicts a stylised *anthropo-morphic cross*: the branches of the cross correspond to the arms of the Man-God, and the inverted V to his legs. I am aware that this symbol may be confused with others, less heterodox, which are sometimes found on monuments: for example, a Platonic cross surmounting a closed triangle, which is merely the base of the cross or, perhaps, the image of Golgotha; or – a Latin cross surmounting a globe or a half-globe. And perhaps the sculptor himself believed in good faith that he was depicting a Catholic symbol here, but he was inspired, more or less consciously,



— on the stylised image of [illegible]hic cross of Catharism, the existence of which in the 12th century [illegible]rom various 'graf ti' and two or three stelae of the same kind — albeit less convincing, it is true.

XLV. Disc-shaped stele. *Labécède-Lauragais* (Aude).

This stele, situated at a crossroads near the Porte d'Amont in Labécède, combines two traditional trends in Cathar symbolism. On the one hand, it has a distinctly anthropomorphic appearance, with the disc representing a head; on the other hand, it is a 'cruix en *Tax'* surmounted by the solar disc. This does not mean that this monument was erected for a Cathar, but rather that the craftsman had a vague recollection of certain heterodox decorative motifs. The small cross adorning the disc is a *Greek* cross. The large cross is an 'r'. It becomes orthodox—and Latin—only through the upper vertical arm—which is notably wider — which connects it to the small Greek **cross** inscribed within the circle. All in all, it reproduces, in sculptural form, the Lombrives graffito (fig. XXX IX).

XLVI. The Christ of *Les Cassés* (Aude).

Two Languedoc crosses — and only two, to my knowledge — bear some resemblance to the Bogomil Christs: they depict not the traditional Crucified One, but a bearded figure with outstretched arms — bent at *the elbows* and displaying his open hands — which are disproportionately large in relation to the rest of the body, as on Bogomil stelae — and who stands with his back against the monument, his legs apart or roughly parallel, like a living man.

One of these crosses was located at *Les Cassés* (Aude), set into the wall of the •cemetery: unfortunately, it has just been stolen (1963). The other is preserved in Baraigne (Aude) (see *Bibliography,* no. 8, photograph). This latter one, to tell the truth, is rather ambiguous. Whilst the wide hands of the figure in prayer are reminiscent of those of the Christ of *Les Cassés* — and of Bogomil figures — his legs are positioned much as they are on Catholic crucifixes. It is therefore above all the cross of *Les Cassés* that seems to me to have been influenced by Bogomil *concepts.* Of course, one could always interpret this sculpture as an Orthodox crucifixion clumsily executed by a village craftsman, who would have appeared heretical only unwittingly and through a lack of skill. But that is too easy an explanation. It would be difficult to understand, were it not for a specific intention, why he would have given the Cross of the Torment such a heterodox character: *this cross,* like that of Baraigne, is *trilobed* (the disc in which Christ's head is depicted is partially broken, but the other two, containing the arms and hands, are intact), as are certain Bogomil crosses from Bosnia.

I am therefore quite inclined to regard these two Languedoc crosses — whilst, however, making some reservations regarding the one from Baraigne — as genuine *anthropomorphic* crosses 'analogous' to those of the Bogomils, and to attribute them to Catharism, or to a 'Cathar' tradition.

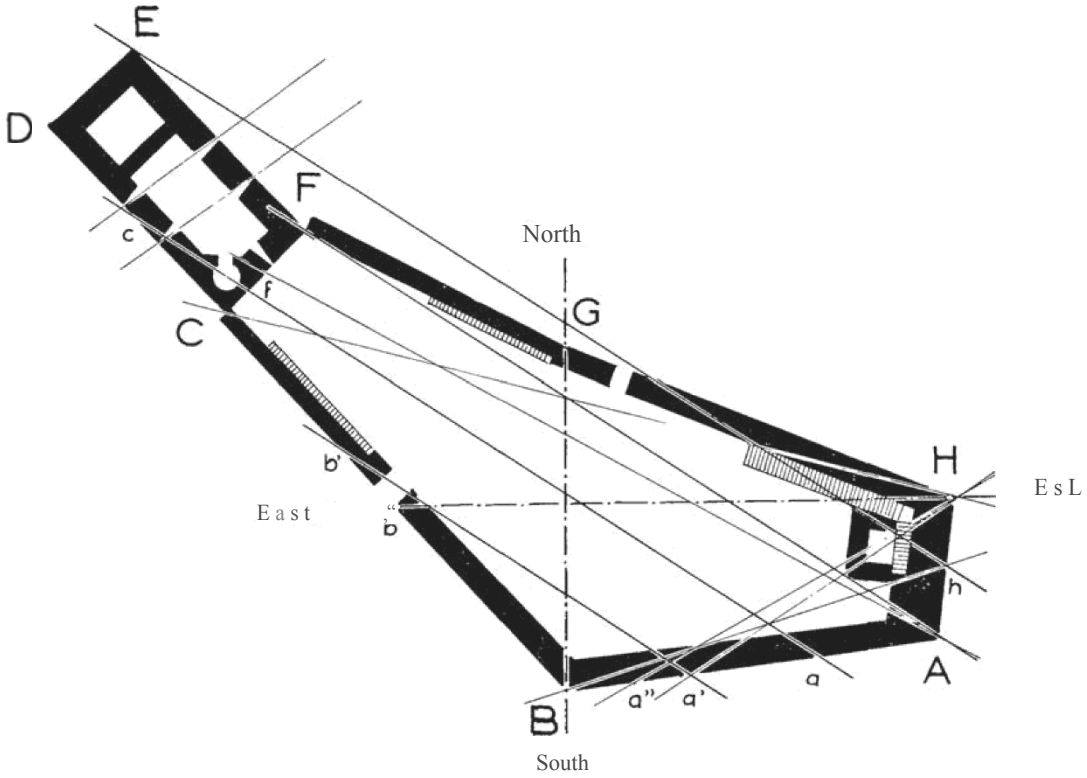
XLVII. Bogomil motif: the **deer hunt.**

(Bol Juni, eastern Herzegovina .)

This motif is common to both the sacred art of the Christian West and Bogomil sculpture. According to the opinion of *Mr* Solovjev • 'The *hunt for the stag* is said *to* symbolise the human soul under attack from the Evil One (the horseman), and hounded by sins (the hunting dogs)'. The Romanesque sculptors must have attributed more or less the same meaning to it.

Architecture and Mystical Golden Ratios

XLVIII. The Château de Montségur in the Light. (í'fi‹ /i‹' £". *N i‹'I.* ›



XLIX. Plan of Montségur Castle. *(Fernand N tel.)*

N0 CE ON THE PLAN OR CH*TE4U DE MO TSR U

One of the most curious features of the castle of Montségur is as follows

Let us draw the lines E h (in the middle of wall 11 A)
F A
c a (c is the midpoint of wall D C and a is such that a A — B A / 3)
b' a' (b' such that C b' = CB/3 and a' such that B a' = B A/3).

These four lines are exactly parallel. It can be assumed that they indicate the overall orientation of the monument, and they are directed towards the rising sun on the winter solstice.

If we now join angles B and G, we obtain an excellent meridian line, and if we draw a line from the midpoint b of the main façade to angle H, we shall have the direction of the equinoctial sunrises, west-east (21 March and 23 September).

Another line to H would indicate the rising point on the summer solstice (21 June). On this subject, it should be noted that the alignments of two opposite arrow slits in the dome give this same rising point, as we have marked on the plan.

To complete what we have termed the 'Moritségur zodiac', we would still need to draw the following lines

f A (midpoint of CF): 2 January (Aquarius) and 22 November (Sagittarius). C H: 19 February (Pisces) and 23 October—Scorpio.
B h: 20 April (Taurus) and 23 August (Virgo).
a" H (a• = B a'/2): 21 May (Gemini) and 22 July (Leo).

This is the most surprising feature of the Montségur plan. There is no need to emphasise its strangeness. For we are not putting forward a theory*; we are describing* what exists. A theory begins when one seeks to provide an explanation for the 'why?'.

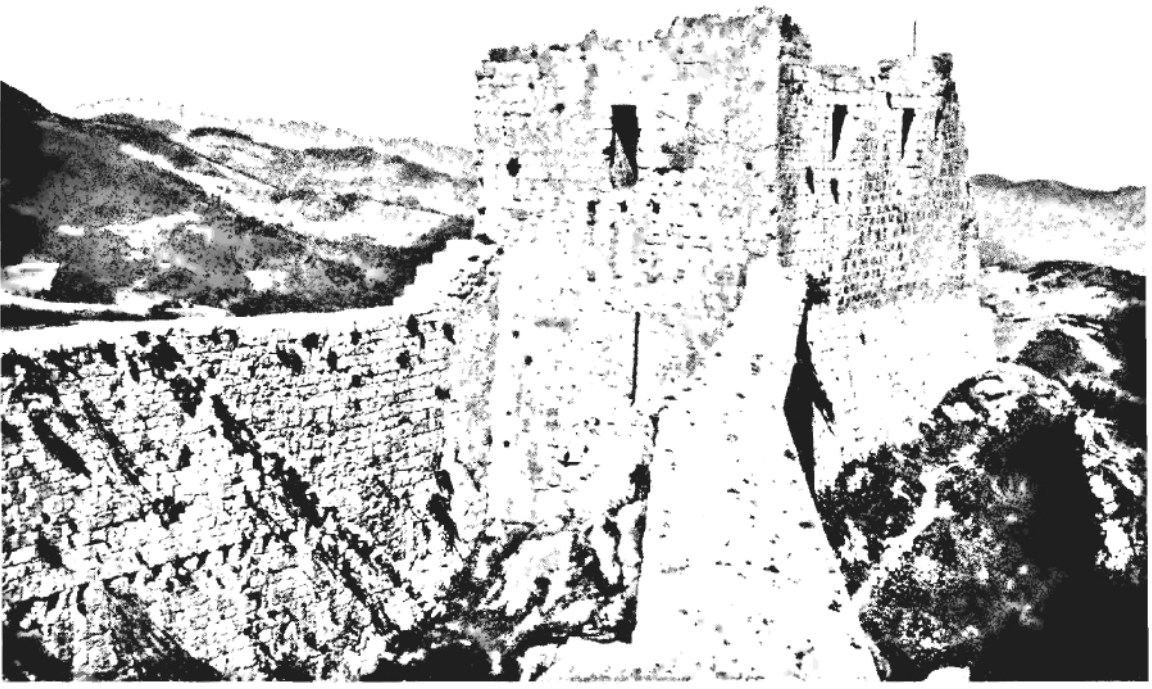
It is an undeniable fact: when one stands at the designated point and looks in the chosen direction, one sees, depending on the date, the sun rise exactly in that direction. Of course, one cannot regard this as a mere coincidence. The probability of this being the case would be negligible. This fact has therefore been intended, and numerous details serve to confirm it.

— If we take the starting points of the as shown in the instructions, and in their order on the map—that is to say: F, f, C, b, B, a•, a, and then, in reverse order, a, a", B, b, C, f, F—the chronological order is maintained.

— The horizon, in the directions of sunrise, either stretches to infinity or is at the same altitude as the castle. For example, the equinoctial sunrises occur on the peak of Bugarach, the highest point in the Corbières and at the same altitude as Montségur. Naturally, this is simply a geographical coincidence, one which the builders have taken advantage of, no doubt since prehistoric times. Such a coincidence is hard to come by, and there are very few places where a monument similar to Montségur could have been built. Due to its proximity to the sea to the east, Oué ribus was one such place, but it was a genuine stronghold. Montségur was certainly not a sun temple in the strict sense of the term, but it could have been one. Another undeniable fact: the Cathars did not worship the sun. Nor did the Manichaeans, for that matter, but for the latter, it was the principal symbol of their religion. The best explanation for the distinctive features of Montségur's layout, it seems to us, is therefore as follows: it was the Manichaeans who had the monument built.

We leave it to the reader to judge the accuracy of this explanation, for, as we said, this is where the theory begins.

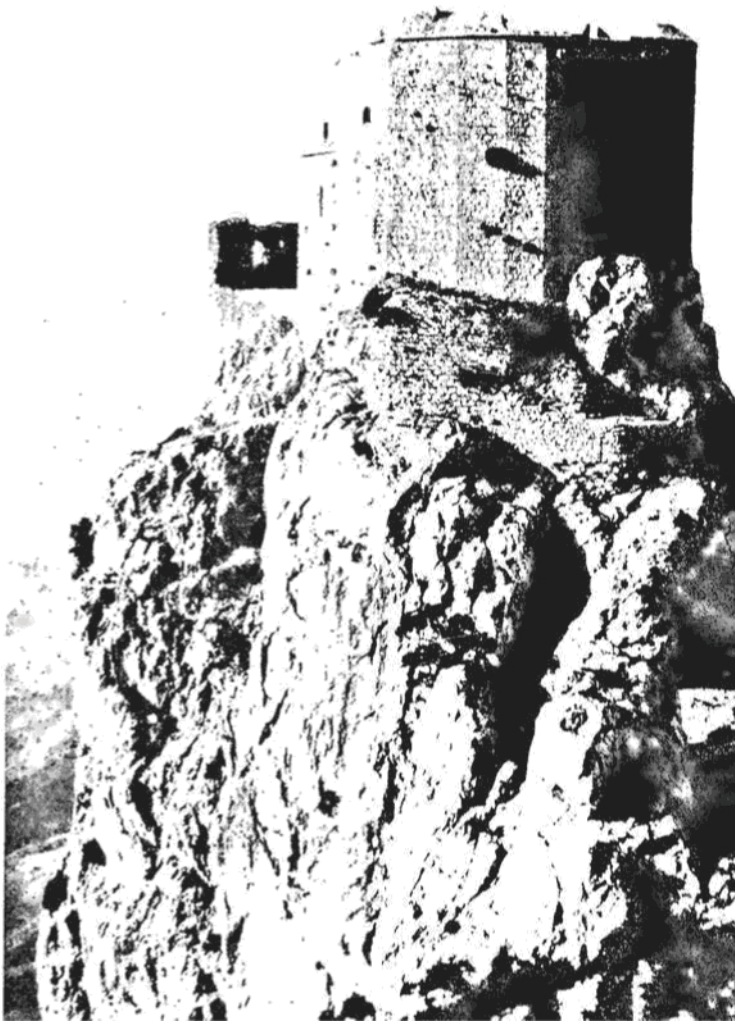
(Fernand Nie1).



L. Montségur,
the keep.

(Photograph by F. Niel.)

The corner formed by the northern façade (marked G on the plan) is clearly visible.



LI. The Château
de Ouéribus.

(Municipality
of Cucugnan, canton of
Tuchan, Aude).

Photograph by Fernand Niel.

We see some common features in Figure 8a*

DB QUÉRIBUS.

A historical document tells us that, around 1241, there existed at Quëribus Castle a 'vaulted hall', where several deacons from the parishes of the Bigeois region resided, under the protection of the lord of the castle, Ethabert de Barbera.

it is highly probable that this vaulted hall is the one that can be seen today in the keep. At least, the walls, the central pillar and the layout of the room of this room's plan—that is to say, the four as shown in the annex, have not changed. As for the ceiling, it was undoubtedly rebuilt in the 14th century.

After 1260, the hall was used as a chapel, the 'Chapel of Saint Louis of Ouéri*us'; however, originally, it was not intended for this purpose, as a a tomb.

It is therefore possible that it dates from the first half of the 12th century. Now, during this period, up until 1256, the castle of Quéribus was owned by the lords of Barbera, near Carcassonne, the last of whom, already mentioned, Chabeit de Barbera, was known for his sympathies towards the heretics, if he was not a heretic himself.

If all of the above were accurate, there would be no major obstacle to regarding the Gothic hall of Quéribus Castle as a Cathar-inspired monument.

Several anomalies can be found in its layout

— Contrary to what one might think on first inspection, the walls do not quite form a square. The north and south walls measure seven metres and the east and west walls 7.32 metres, that is, one foot more.

— These walls are not exactly aligned with the four cardinal points, but form an angle of approximately six degrees with these directions. The sides of the pillar's base, however, are correctly aligned with these points.

— The pillar is not in the centre of the room. It is quite significantly offset towards the south-east.

All these anomalies could have been avoided. This is not a matter of carelessness, errors or unintentional mistakes. They are far too glaring to be attributed to the incompetence or negligence of the master builder. The project manager certainly intended these anomalies and included them in his plans with full knowledge of the facts.

One might offer a host of explanations for the oddities of the Gothic hall. We are already familiar with quite a few of them, but here is what we can observe

A straight line, starting from the Culée-Impe h and tangent to the pillar, indicates the exact north-south line.

— Another straight line, starting from the lamp base f, also tangent to the pillar, also marks the exact direction east–west.

— The view of an observer standing is the key to Vault c, tangent to the pillar, would follow the direction of the rising sun at the winter solstice (line c q).

— The same would apply to the summer solstice, if the observer were situated beneath the keystone b (line b n).

— If, now, one stands at point g, such that g C BC/3, the two directions tangent to pillar g, p and r, indicated by the following sunrises

g p = 21 January (Aquarius) and M November (Sagittarius)
g r = 20 February (Pisces) and 23 October (Scorpio).

Finally, when standing at point e, such that e B = BC/4, The two tangent lines at pillars e, m and o give the following rising times

e m — 21 May (Gemini) and 22 July (Leo). e o = 20 April (Taurus) and 23 August (Virgo). It should be noted

— that all these directions are tangent to the pillar;

— that they explain the architectural anomalies observed in the monument;

— that they originate at the following notable points: c, g, I, e, b (where f' indicates the direction of the equinoxes); and that, if one follows the order of these points downwards—c, g, f, e, b—and then upwards—b, e, f, g, c—one closely follows the chronological order of the principal annual solar rises.

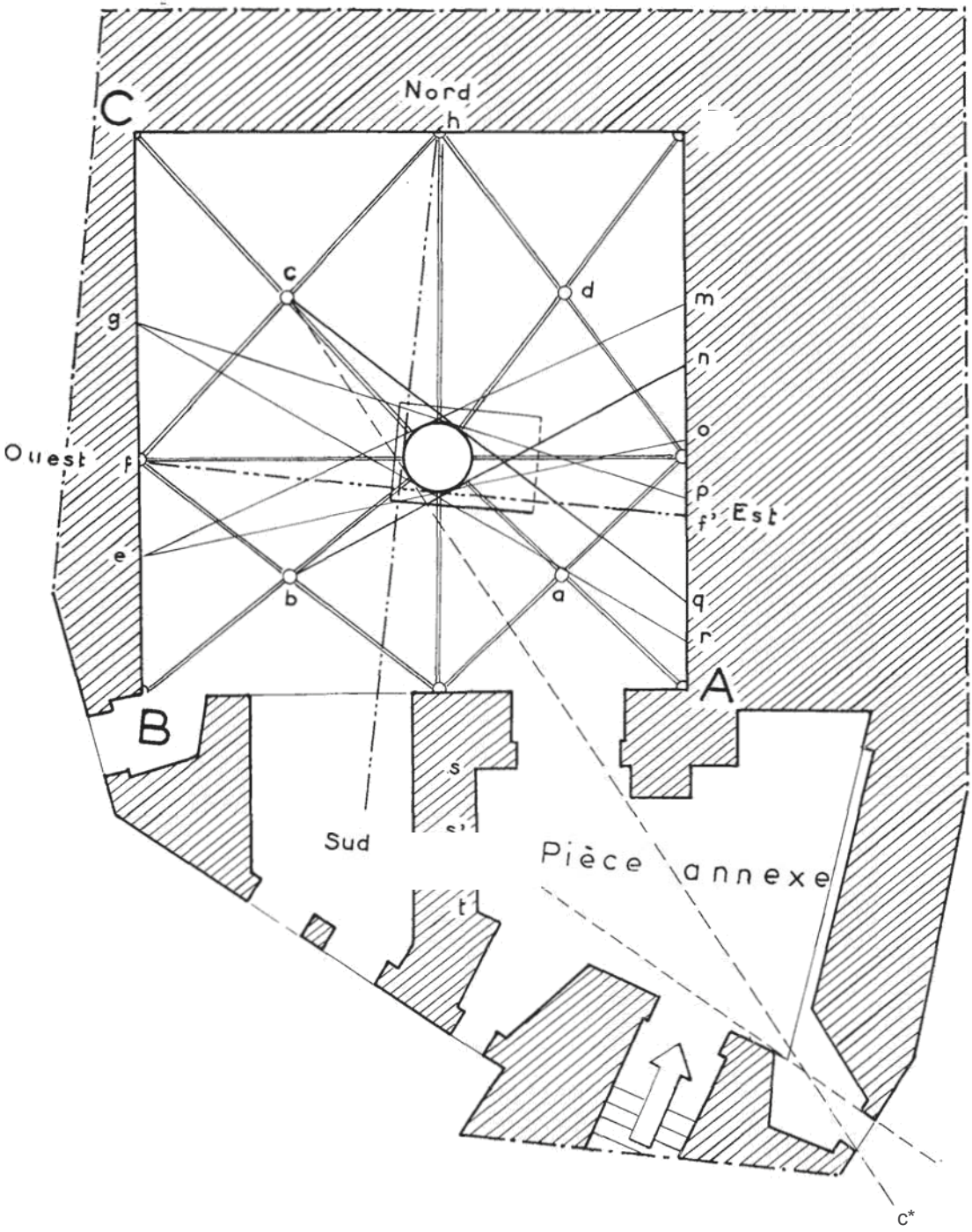
In the Gothic hall at Queribus, there is a system comparable to that of Montségur, with the difference that no direct observations were possible here. Queribus was, above all, a military stronghold. As the eastern wall was the only one exposed to attack, there was no question of making any openings in it.

Consequently, if Quéribus's 'zodiaque' was used for any purpose at all, it could only have been symbolic. The central pillar may have represented the sun, which remained invisible at sunrise from inside the hall.

The only possible direct observation was from a position in the middle of the south wall of the adjoining room. From this point, one could see the sun rise at the winter solstice, aligned with the jambs of the small window cut into the east-facing façade.

Given the current state of our knowledge, we cannot say whether the Cathars who lived at Quéribus made use of the solar symbolism of the Gothic hall, but what we can be stated with a high degree of probability is that Manicheans would have made use of it.

(Fernand Miel).



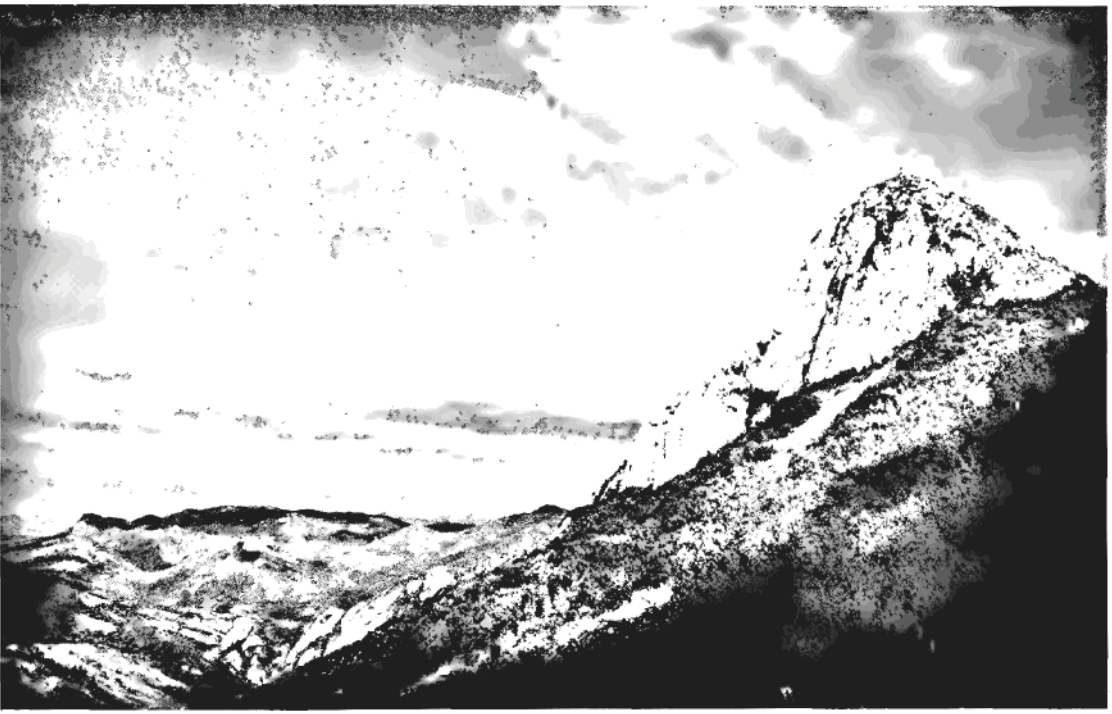
LII. Quérlbus Castle.

Plan of the interior of the keep.
(Fernand diet.)

LIII. Quérlbus: Interior
of the keep. (Photograph F. N. Tel,)

At the winter solstice. Before disappearing, the sun's ray strikes the pillar tangentially. Referring to the plan, the ray follows the path C' C.

Places of interest and spiritual sites



LIV. Montségur Castle.

(See *F. N., tel.)*

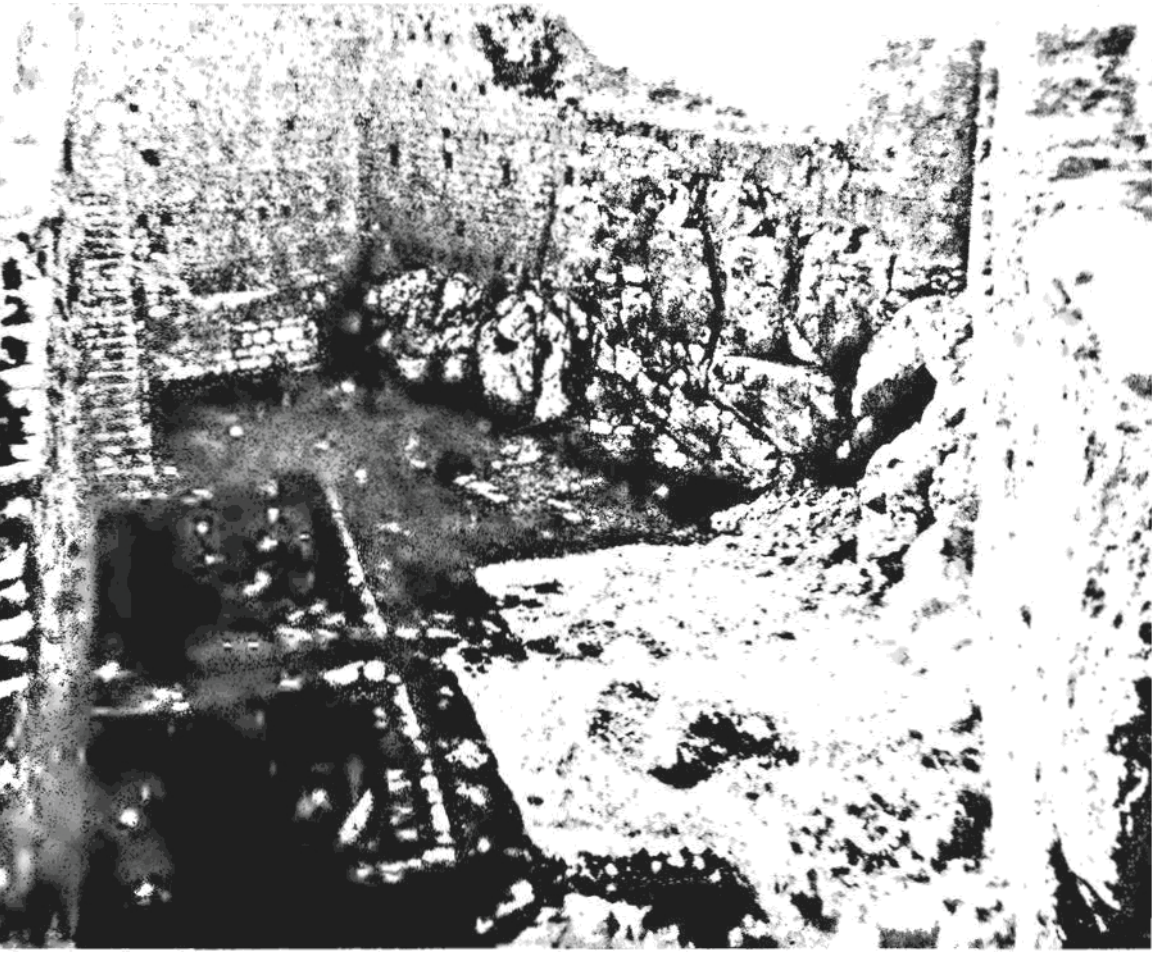
To the victors, a fortress; to the vanquished, a temple

Joë Bousquet.

LV. Montségur Castle.

(after Claude Amief.)

A grand pose.



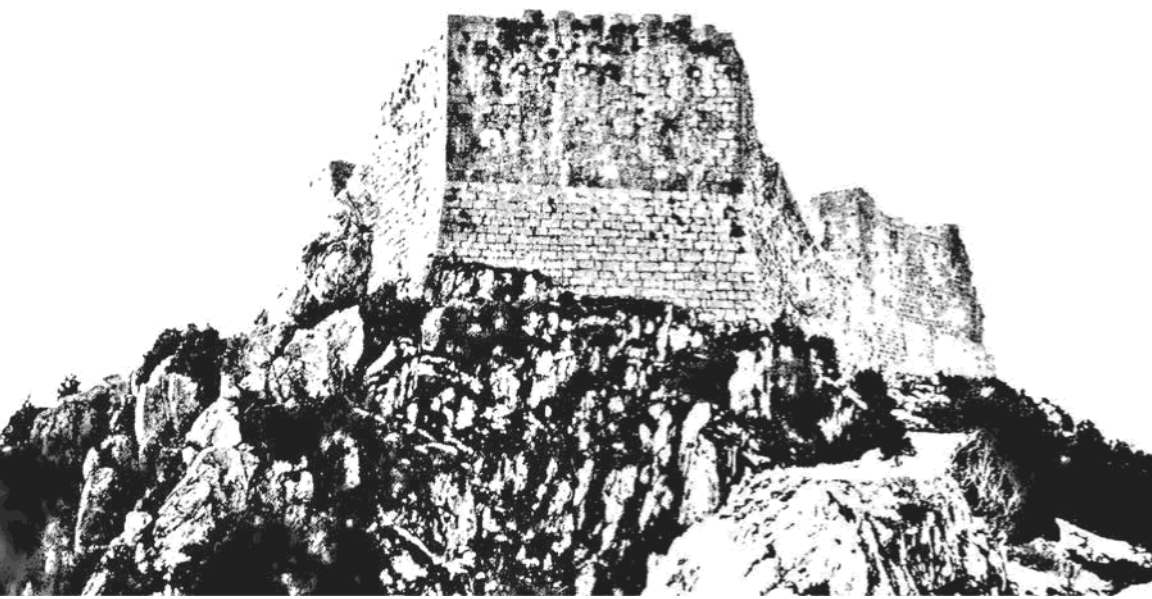
LVI. Interior of Montségur Castle.

Photograph I. Double.)

View taken in 1951, during the initial restoration work.

LVII. Montségur Castle. (PJiofo *Yan.)*
The staircase leading to the keep. (The steps have disappeared.)

LVIII. Montségur. *(C/ic/id F.* Nief.) The castle's eastern façade.



LIX. Montségur: **the Cathar huts.**
Photo: Claude Trtef.)

The northern edge of the 'Pog' of Montségur, between the castle wall and the precipice, is occupied by a series of terraces, the retaining walls of which are still visible. On these terraces stood the old village of Montségur, where many 'bonshornmes' owned a humble house—or rather, a hut. It was in one of these huts that a terracotta dove (Fig. II), a lead pentagram (Fig. XXXVI) and various medallions (Fig. XXXVI I) were discovered.

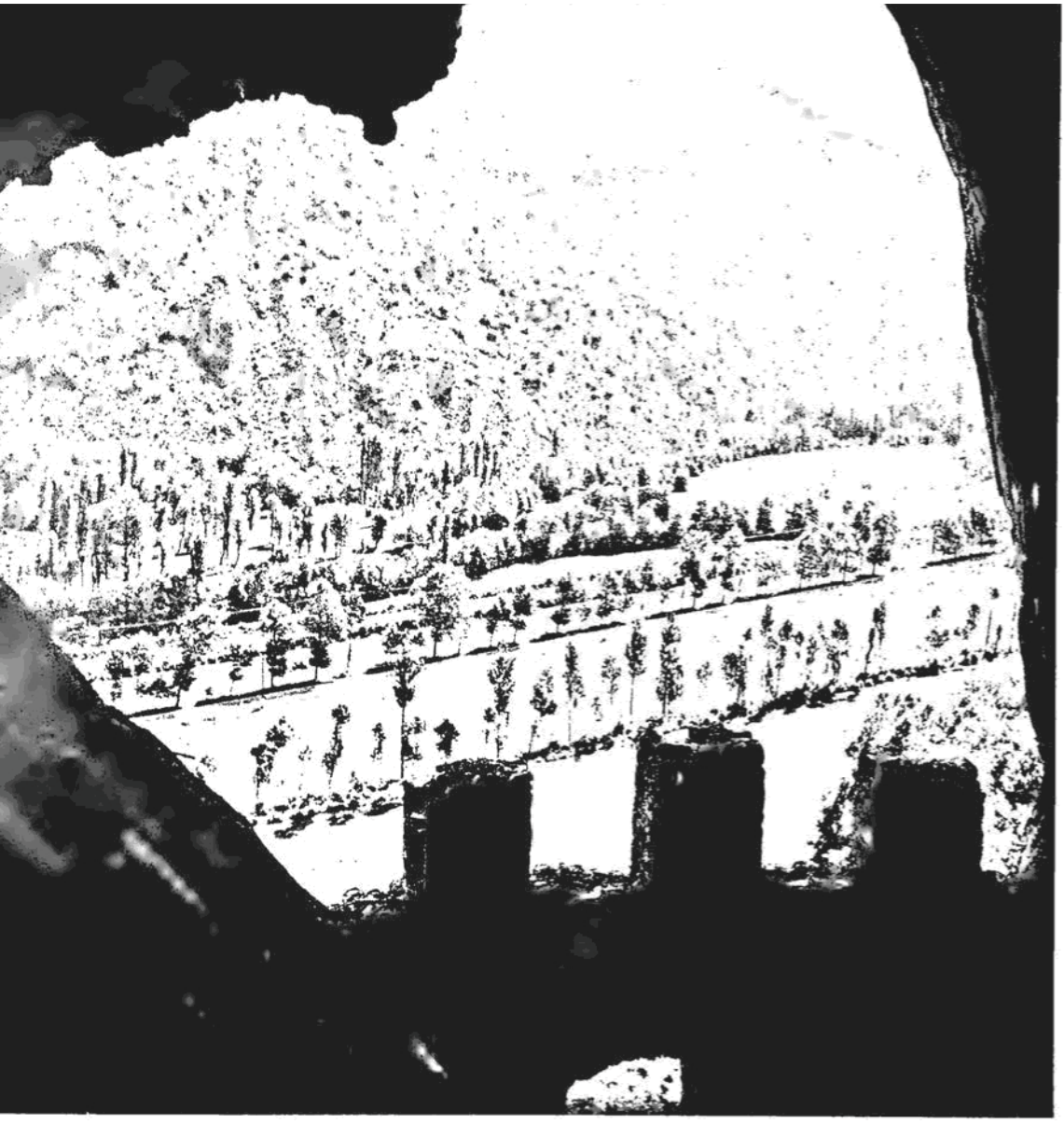
LX. Montségur. A few large-calibre stone cannonballs

(for trebuchets or other war machines), still in situ near the ‘Pas du Trëbuchet’. *Photograph by Ferriand* Ciel.)

LXI. The fortified **cave** at Bouan (Ussat, Ariège). *(Photo: Yam).*

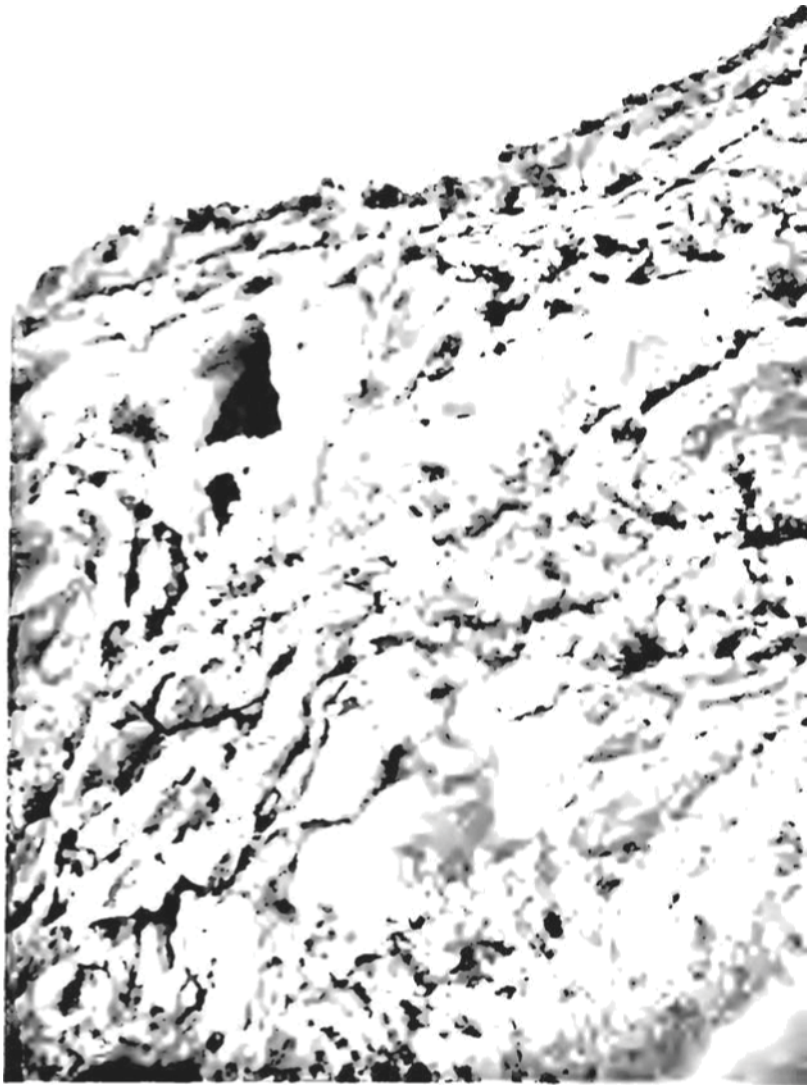
Many caves in Ariège, the *'spolgas'*, were fortified in the 11th-Xth… centuries … they belonged to the local lords . It was particularly after the fall of Montségur (1244) that they served as a refuge for the persecuted Cathars and the *faidits* (outlaws).

15G



LXI I. The fortified cave at Bouan.
Photo: Yan.)

View taken from inside the upper chamber.



LXI II. The fortified cave at Bnichon, Ariège. In the

hamlet of Baichon, in the commune of Miglos.

« Un signe — en forme d'arbalete — grave au burin au bas de la paroi calcaire, indiquait aux cathares la direction a prendre pour atteindre aciilement une corniche, d'ou ils pouvaient ensuite avec une echelle de Three, reach the *plain*.

{c'llc“ c't,l c| ti iJïbi lï • I ‘<•x |› I i‹ .ll i‹›l ï |› i t ›|1‹ ›• ”‹” |›.i i l 'i ii \ ‹'i i i ‹•t i i ‹l‹' l.› ÿ i ‹ ›l I ‹ i

VI. L.irJtzttc (UN* I, 11.ils Il c*•t |1‹›•>Ib›lc” ‹]tlc” l‹' >iÿil‹• ‹'il ‹ ci‹-sl it›li •‹'il

<much older (prehistoric or proto-historical).

LXIV. Maison d'Cerf, at **Roquecourbe (Tat a).**

Photo by *Jack•Photo.1*

This house, which dates from the late 14th century, certainly did not harbour any Cathars. However, it retains external timberwork, one panel of which depicts a hunt for ***a stag*** (see fig. **XLII),** which may bear witness to the survival (?) of the old Manichaean symbolic theme. A photograph of the 'Maison du Cerf' was featured at the exhibition: *History and Iconography of Catharism.*

LXV. View of Fanjeaux.

Photo: Yan.)

Fanjeaux (Aude) was for many years, particularly up until 1209, one of the spiritual capitals of Catharism.

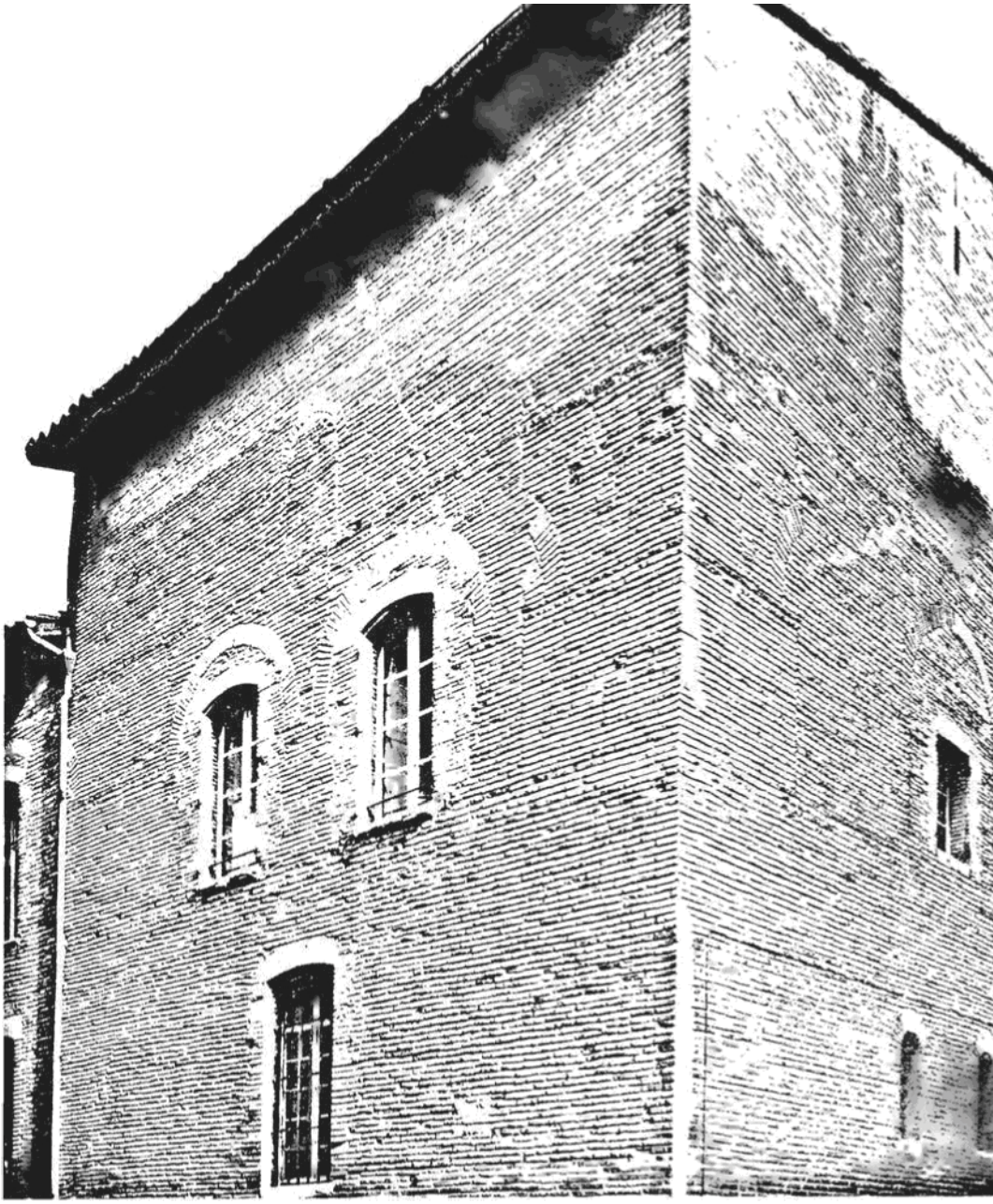
LXVI. Fanjeaux. The house of Saint Dominic.

Photo by Yan.)

It was at the house of Guilhaberl de Cast res, adjacent to the seigneurial castle of Fanjeaux, that the ceremony took place in 1204 during which Esclarmonde, sister of the Count of Foix, received the *Consolamentum* from the hands of this bishop. It is likely that she stayed on this occasion at the castle of Guilhem de Durfort, lord of the manor and a troubadour. In this very same castle, Saint Dominic is said to have performed, during a 'contradictory' debate attended by Cathars and Catholics, the famous *miracle of the fire* (before 1209).

The house inhabited by Saint Dominic in 1211 or in 1214 — which, incidentally, is the house where, according to tradition, the Cathar bishop Guilhabert de Castres is said to have lived before him — has been restored by the Dominicans, who allow it to be visited.

The former seigneurial castle of the Durfort family — which retains some interesting remains — is now part of the Dominican convent at Fanjeaux.



LXVII. The Mauran Tower (12th century). — Toulouse. — *'Photo Yari.'*

Among the great families—noble or bourgeois—of Toulouse, who, in the 11th and 12th centuries, *professed* Catharism or adhered to the 'Cathar Party', one must mention the Mauran family, one of whose members, Pierre Mauran, played an important role in the history of the City.

All that remains of their residence is the Mauran Tower, 50 metres from the Taur (University Library). It shows, as Mr Robert Mesuret rightly points out,

'that in the 11th century the people of Toulouse were familiar with the mullioned window'. *(Toulouse and the Languedoc,* p. 103). It is, adds Mr Mesuret, along with the five twin windows of the house at 15 Rue Croix-Baragnon, 'our only surviving examples of Romanesque architecture'

LXVIII. Epitaph of Sans Morlane.

Photograph • Art et Photo •›.)

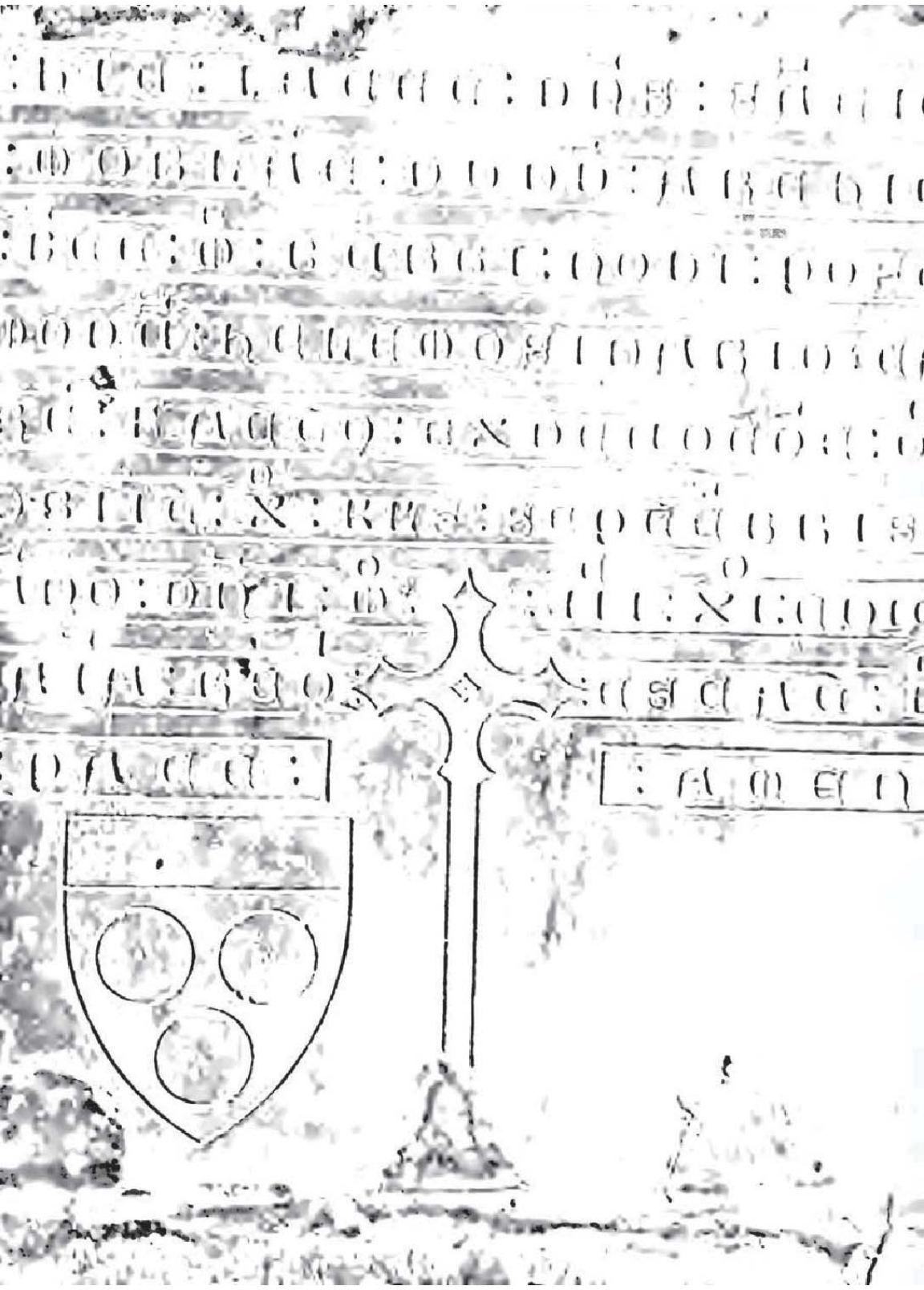
Near the Porte Sainte-Anne in the north transept of the Church of Saint-Nazaire (Cité de Carcassonne), a tombstone measuring 0.60 m in height by 0.55 m in width is set into the wall. It bears the epitaph, in fine capital letters from the early 14th century, of Sans Morlane, archdeacon of Sainte-Marie du Bourg-Neuf, later chaplain of the Church of Saint-Nazaire, who died on
23 August 1311

HIC. IAC ET. D(OM I)N(U)S. SA(N)CI(U)S
MORLA(N)E. DU DU(M‘1. ARCH ID(IACON US)
B(EA)T E. M(ARI)E. BURG I. NOV I. POST
MODU(M) H ELEMO SI MAR I(US). CA
RC(ASSONE). FACT(US). EX DE UOC(I)0(N)E. O(U)I
OB IIT X°. K(A)L(ENDAJS. SEPTEMBER A(N)NO.
D(OMI)NI. No. III°. XI°. CUI(US)
A(N)I(M)A. REO(U)IESCAT. I(N) PACE.
AMEN.

At the bottom of the gravestone, to the left of the cross situated in the middle of the last three lines of the epitaph, are engraved the coat of arms of the deceased: of... with a chief of... bearing three besans of... arranged 2 and 1.

This singular figure, a wealthy burgher and Catholic priest, who contributed through his generosity to the construction of the Church of the Carmelites (consecrated in 1297) and that of the Augustinians (completed in 1305), was, whilst in
‘clandestinely’, a staunch Cathar. Although he may not have received the initiation of the ‘Partaits’, he attended the ‘heretical’ assemblies; there he ‘worshipped’ the Bons-Hommes. Above all, he took an active part in the resistance movements—of a municipal and bourgeois nature—which were then being organised in some southern towns against the Inquisition, and at times against royal authority. In Carcassonne he hatched a veritable plot (1284–85) to seize the ‘leather bags’ from the Inquisition’s headquarters, containing the lists of burghers suspected of heresy. This plot was uncovered. The Inquisitor Jean Galand immediately denounced Sans Morlane as a heretic to Pope Honorius IV. But after a lengthy trial, full of various incidents, the Pope — and this is the most curious aspect of the affair — eventually informed Jean Galand that, as the inquisitorial proceedings had been irregular, it was not appropriate to pursue Sans Morlane until the evidence in his case had been re-examined. He lived out the rest of his days in peace, without further trouble.

One may conclude that the Cathar *faction*, supported by the consuls, the bourgeoisie, and no doubt also by the majority of the population, and possessing considerable financial resources formed in Carcassonne, around 1285, a sort of very active and very powerful Freemasonry. — As far as I am aware, Sans Morlane is the only ‘heretic’ whose ashes rest in a Catholic church.



LXIX. A stele erected at Montségur,

by the *Society for Cathar Remembrance and Studies.* This small monument, erected in memory of *the Cathars,* the 'rrtnrftrs *del pur amor crestian',* in the *'camp dels cremats*' (the field of the burnt), on the slopes of Montségur, was unveiled on 6 June 1960. It is a modern disc-shaped stele bearing, on one side, the cross with equal arms (our photograph), and on the other, beneath the five-pointed star, a weaver's shuttle (a symbolism fortunately inspired by that of the ancient disc-shaped stele at Baraigne). — See fig. XV.

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